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Wednesday, 29 October 2003, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Negroponte	(United States of America)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Ms. Müller
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mrs. Arce de Jeannet
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Karev
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry

Agenda

Women and peace and security

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03-58465 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Women and peace and security

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Fiji, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Timor-Leste, Ukraine and the United Republic of Tanzania in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to Her Excellency Ms. Agnes van Ardenne, Minister for Development and Cooperation of the Netherlands.

Likewise, on behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Kaliopate Tavola, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Fiji.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Amy Smythe, Senior Gender Adviser of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

It is so decided.

I invite Ms. Smythe to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I should like to welcome members of the Council, our visiting speakers and our guests. I have already acknowledged the presence of the Minister for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, Ms. Agnes van Ardenne. I should like also to welcome Ms. Angela King and Ms. Noeleen Heyzer to this debate on conflict, peacekeeping and gender. I hope that we will have a useful discussion on this very important topic. I am especially pleased that in today's discussion we will have a unique perspective, in addition to that provided by Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno, who will speak more broadly about the progress that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has made towards implementation. We will also hear directly from the Senior Gender Adviser to MONUC, who is mandated to work on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the field.

Please allow me to begin by saying a few words about the format for the meeting. I will shortly be inviting Mr. Guéhenno and Ms. Smythe to talk to us for a few minutes about their work in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). I will then invite the 15 member States of the Security Council to comment and ask questions. I then propose to invite our guest speakers to respond to points raised thus far. We will then give the floor to those non-Council members inscribed on the speakers' list and conclude by once more offering Mr. Guéhenno and Ms. Smythe an opportunity to respond to comments made and questions raised by Member States.

In the interests of time, we would suggest that Member States try to limit their presentations to five

minutes. At the conclusion of today's meeting, the presidency will prepare a summary, on its own authority, of the main points of this meeting, which will be issued as a press statement. Of course, the record of the Council meeting itself will also be available for anyone to refer to after the fact.

I should like to make one additional procedural point. The Secretary-General is having his annual meeting of the heads of the principal organs of the United Nations at 12.30 this afternoon, which I have been invited to attend in my capacity as President of the Security Council. Ambassador Cunningham will then conduct the meeting until 1.15 p.m. If it is necessary that we meet in the afternoon, we will break until 3 p.m., at which time we will hear the remaining speakers on the list.

I now give the floor to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno.

Mr. Guéhenno (*spoke in French*): Three years ago, the Security Council took a bold stance on the role of women in conflict by adopting resolution 1325 (2000). It recognized that women and girls bear the brunt of armed conflict and also that they are an essential part of any lasting solution. This has significant implications for our peacekeeping operations and calls for a radical change in the way we do our work.

I welcome the opportunity offered us today to take stock of the efforts made to date to implement resolution 1325 (2000) in peacekeeping operations and to highlight some of the challenges facing us in the year to come. The Senior Gender Adviser of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), Ms. Amy Smythe, will later speak on the practical realities of implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and will provide a perspective from the field level in the Democratic Republic of Congo on this issue. I would like also to acknowledge the contributions received from our partners in the United Nations system, as well as from non-governmental organizations, for this presentation.

As we all know, women and girls do not experience conflict in the same way as men and boys. Women and girls suffer disproportionately in time of war. Pre-existing inequalities are magnified and exacerbated by conflict and social networks break down, making women and girls highly vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation. We have learned that when a peacekeeping operation is deployed in such an environment, out first duty is to listen to the voices of the victims. Only in this way can we best understand how effectively to help women and girls and how to lay down the foundations for a lasting peace.

Women are also a source of strength and inspiration in our struggle. We recognize the tremendous impact that they can have when their knowledge, skills and energy are harnessed in the name of peace and of rebuilding a country devastated by war. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has greatly benefited from the support it has received from such agencies as United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which have strong links with the national women's networks that exist in many countries.

Over the past 12 months, the Department has taken concrete steps to implement resolution 1325 (2000). This is particularly true in the context of multidimensional peacekeeping operations such as those in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kosovo, Timor-Leste and Afghanistan. In all of those missions, gender experts — working either alone or as part of a larger gender affairs unit — are playing an active and decisive role, putting gender issues at the centre of peacekeeping.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been focusing its efforts in particular on five main areas highlighted in resolution 1325 (2000): first, increasing the number of women in peacekeeping operations; secondly, integrating a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations; thirdly, training in gender awareness and HIV/AIDS issues; fourthly, strengthening discipline for peacekeeping personnel, both through effective preventive action and by a firm response to any misconduct; and fifthly, combating trafficking in human beings.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me start with the issue of gender balance among peacekeeping personnel. The importance of having equal numbers of men and women on our staff at all levels of the Organization is a given. But we need to lead by example. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) often finds itself in the awkward position of advocating for a higher percentage of women in national police forces than it has in its own ranks.

Women make up 4 per cent of total civilian police personnel in DPKO missions, and figures are equally low for the military. I urge Member States to continue and intensify their efforts to provide more women civilian police and military personnel to peacekeeping operations. I also call for the inclusion of women and men with experience in gender-based crimes to help us address the high rates of violence against women that are common in post-conflict situations.

DPKO is addressing this challenge in-house. We have started, on a pilot basis, to encourage more women applicants by targeting professional women's associations with our vacancy announcements. At the Director level and above, the number of women has increased fourfold over the past year. In the 15 DPKO peacekeeping missions, women currently represent one third of all professional staff. We recognize, however, that our figures offer no ground for complacency. DPKO intends to be more effective in the coming year in identifying suitable women candidates for senior positions and in recruiting professional-level women for missions.

But, all too often, gender mainstreaming is reduced to an accountancy exercise in which managers focus on the number of women on their staff. We tend to overlook the need to include a gender dimension in the programmes they are managing. Gender balance is essential, but it is only half of the story. We also need to make sure that our programmes take into account the different needs of women and men, and that they tap into their strengths. Let me give an example of how looking at our disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Sierra Leone from a gender perspective has made it more effective.

In the past, adult male ex-combatants were the only focus of our attention. They were the ones registered and given a package of benefits to help them return to civilian life. This meant that women who either were ex-combatants or were working in support roles such as cooks, as well as wives — or even girls abducted and forced to work as sexual slaves — were being left out of the picture. Now, our help is also directed towards those women and girls, and is tailored to meet such special needs as trauma counselling for abducted girls who worked as sexual slaves.

To help demystify gender mainstreaming, a number of practical field manuals are being produced. A gender resource package is in the final stages of being developed. It will cover a wide range of topics, from general information on gender concepts and practical checklists highlighting gender issues in peacekeeping, to guidelines on establishing gender units in the field. In addition, in the coming year we will be producing a field manual on gender issues for military commanders, as well as one on gender issues in mine action.

I would like to thank Member States for having approved, this year, the post of Gender Advisor, based at DPKO headquarters. We have temporarily filled the position, until the recruitment of the post is concluded early next year. The Gender Advisor has already begun to assist us in coordinating our efforts on gender issues in a more effective way and in facilitating cross-regional learning. One of her first tasks will be to take stock of all the positive efforts made to date in the area of gender mainstreaming, identify some of the main gaps and help us identify a comprehensive strategy to move forward. A network of gender focal points will also be established in the coming year to assist in mainstreaming efforts.

I would now like to turn to gender mainstreaming in missions. Some peacekeeping operations have restrictive mandates that focus on military tasks, and opportunities for gender mainstreaming in such missions are limited. However, the scope for gender mainstreaming is much broader in multidimensional peacekeeping operations. At present, we have gender advisors or specialists in five multidimensional missions: in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Timor-Leste and Afghanistan. In addition, gender advisor posts have been established for Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

Time and time again, we have seen that gender affairs units or gender specialists in missions improve a mission's effectiveness in discharging its mandate and in helping us to have a light footprint. For instance, in Kosovo, where the mission has executive and legislative responsibilities, the Senior Gender Advisor has helped the transitional Government draft a law on gender equality. That law will have a lasting, positive impact on the lives of women and girls, and the process has provided the Kosovar transitional administration with the skills to carry out legal reform from a gender perspective, including after the United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo is gone.

In Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, DPKO gender advisors are improving the quality of the missions' work by training national police forces in how best to handle gender-based crimes, especially domestic violence. In Afghanistan, gender analysis has helped the mission plan more inclusive elections. The mission's electoral unit analysed the potential challenges relating to the registration of women. It is now introducing a number of measures to facilitate women's participation in elections, such as separate registration facilities for women. In Georgia, where there is no full-time gender specialist, many important efforts to mainstream gender into programmes have still gone ahead. For instance, the mission there is facilitating the participation of women from Abkhazia in conflict resolution and peace-building efforts.

Giving members these examples may make gender mainstreaming sound easy, but it is not. Our gender experts in the missions repeatedly express their frustration about the lip service paid to gender issues. We need to move beyond empty words and actually practice what we preach. I intend to ensure that all future, multidimensional peacekeeping operations include strong gender expertise, for instance in the form of a gender affairs unit that has access to senior-level decision-making in all areas of the mission's work. I hope that Member States will support that effort.

Training on gender awareness and HIV/AIDS is another key element of resolution 1325 (2000). DPKO has disseminated a generic "Gender and Peacekeeping" training manual to all peacekeeping missions and to Member States. In the past year, nine "train the trainers" courses have been conducted by DPKO for more than 350 training officers from Member States. I urge Member States to ensure that this training package is included in all pre-deployment training for both military and civilian police. On my side, I will ensure that gender training is included in all induction courses for new personnel.

DPKO continues to prevent and respond to the problem of HIV/AIDS in peacekeeping operations. At present, HIV/AIDS Policy Officers are deployed in four field missions: the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor. The focus in the past year has been on prevention through training, often carried out in collaboration with United Nations and national partners. For instance, in Sierra Leone, DPKO, together with the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, conducted four workshops in the past year on HIV/AIDS, gender and human rights for military and civilian peacekeepers. In Timor-Leste, the mission has provided voluntary, confidential HIV counselling and testing since February 2003.

The grave allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation of refugees and internally displaced women and children by humanitarian workers and peacekeepers, which first arose in West Africa, have strengthened DPKO's resolve to uphold a zero-tolerance stance aimed at preventing and effectively responding to this very serious problem, which not only violates human rights, but also undermines the very core of our mission in peacekeeping. Following a thorough review of existing policies and procedures on disciplinary issues for all categories of personnel, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) provided all missions in July of this year with an updated set of disciplinary directives. These cover the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation as well as other types of serious misconduct. In the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), senior managers recently received training on the directives. In the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), a Personnel Conduct Committee receives and investigates allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeeping personnel, and a telephone hotline has been set up for reporting incidents of misconduct.

In the coming year, DPKO will ensure that each mission has an active strategy to prevent and respond to the problems of sexual abuse and exploitation. Each mission will appoint a senior focal point to receive complaints of misconduct by peacekeeping personnel. DPKO will also continue to work on ensuring that senior managers in missions know how to use and apply the disciplinary directives, and that they have the in-mission capacity to investigate allegations. Training, reporting and follow-up mechanisms will also be strengthened. Lastly, DPKO will review existing efforts to prevent and respond to sexual abuse and exploitation, and identify good practices for replication elsewhere.

While we can — and should — do all of these things, we need your support to make a real difference. Personnel contributed for service in a peacekeeping operation are required to abide by the highest standards of integrity while in service for the United Nations. We expect contributing States to provide pre-deployment briefings to all of their personnel on these standards and to vigorously pursue any breaches. We also seek systematic feedback on action taken by Member States against peacekeepers repatriated for serious misconduct.

Before closing, I would like to touch briefly on the issue of trafficking of women. We all recognize that this is a complex, multifaceted problem that has links to organized crime networks. Experience also teaches us that there is no single, easy solution to this problem. DPKO is currently undertaking a lessons-learned study on our anti-trafficking programmes in Bosnia and Kosovo. The results of this study will help us identify best practices and some lessons learned in tackling the trafficking of women.

We have made real progress on gender mainstreaming in our peacekeeping operations. Much of it is due to the presence of full time gender advisers. We acknowledge that there is a long road ahead of us, and that gender mainstreaming in post-conflict environments is not easy. It will take a concerted effort of will. We must learn to see gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping not as an afterthought, but as the key to any peacekeeping mission's success.

We look forward to strong collaboration with Member States as well as with our United Nations and non-governmental organization partners to ensure that peacekeeping operations bring lasting and positive changes to the lives of women and girls and their communities.

The President: I give the floor to the Senior Gender Adviser of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

Ms. Smythe: I am grateful for the invitation to bring to Council members a field perspective on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). This invitation is not only an honour for MONUC, but indeed for all Gender Advisers, mission-wide.

Before briefing you on the work of mainstreaming gender in the field, allow me to briefly summarize some of the key gender challenges in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The International Rescue Committee estimates that up to 3.5 million people, mostly civilians, have perished in the past four and-a-half years of war. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that there are currently 3.4 million internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and around 17 million people are food insecure. Forty-one per cent of all children are undernourished. At least 1.3 million people are infected with the HIV virus, whose prevalence among soldiers and irregular combatants is around 60 per cent.

The consequences for women throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been devastating, as they have suffered the most. Some key features affecting women are internal displacement; the breakdown of almost every institution, beginning with the family; the inability to take care of crops or cultivate farms; rape and sexual violence on a massive scale, and complete impunity for the perpetrators of these heinous crimes. In essence, the law of the gun has devastated the condition of women.

It was in this context of one of the world's greatest living tragedies that the Gender Unit was set up in March 2002. A small but very important office, staffed with a Senior Gender Adviser and her Deputy, two United Nations Volunteers, an administrative officer and two local officers, the Unit had to adopt a two-pronged strategy. The first was to integrate a gender perspective within MONUC itself. The second was to work with the Congolese population and society to bring the realities of the conflict, as they especially affect women, to the attention of decision makers in the peace process and the transitional government.

The Unit, together with other components of MONUC, has facilitated the implementation of MONUC's mandate through activities such as training and research, communication and dissemination of gender sensitive information, outreach to the Congolese population, capacity-building for women leaders and advocacy and monitoring and evaluation of women's participation in the peace and transition processes.

I will now comment on activities within MONUC. Allow me to begin with the activities of

disseminating information within MONUC, soon after the Gender Unit was set up. The first task was to sensitize chiefs of sections and divisions to the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000), beginning with the Office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, with the objective of seeking their personal commitment to the gender message and to take action. Once this was accomplished with both military and civilian heads, the message was shared with colleagues in the agencies and the international community. The sensitization included the distribution of information on the mandate and scope of work of the Gender Unit and the encouragement of managers to initiate a two-way exchange of relevant information with the Unit.

The second task that was critical to the implementation of our mandate was the gender sensitization training of Military Observers, the United Nations Civilian Police (CIVPOL) and civilian personnel upon their arrival at the mission, as well as with contingents when possible. The need to systematically train the contingents continues to be crucial because the military and CIVPOL live and work nearest to the communities in the conflict areas. Their behaviour is therefore not only used to judge MONUC in many instances but becomes the yardstick emulated by the population and Government. The staff of the Gender Unit also provides gender training to the Congolese National Police.

There have been sessions in Kisangani and Bunia which have resulted in improved awareness by the police of the rights of women, as well as men, in society. Trainees deployed in Kindu are working closely with women's group on cases of violence against women.

I turn now to the issue of recruiting more women peacekeepers. Women have had an enhancing role, especially in the work with victims of sexual violence, and as community bridge-builders. Victims, usually female, have repeatedly intimated that the sight of a male officer in uniform makes them relive the experience of the violation all over again. Thus, there is a serious need for women military and CIVPOL officers.

The pattern of recruitment of CIVPOL officers in MONUC is a major concern. Regrettably, the proportion of women, instead of increasing to address the problems of violence against women, is steadily decreasing. Statistics show that, before June 2003, out of 15 CIVPOL officers there was one woman. As of 9 June, however, out of 69 officers there were three women. At present, out of 90 CIVPOL officers there are still only three women. I would strongly urge police-contributing countries to take prompt action in this area. The expectation of the gender Office is that, of the 182 CIVPOL officers that are to be recruited this year, at least 20 should be women.

The low percentage of women in CIVPOL is equally reflected in the training of the Congolese National Police that has been carried out by the gender Office. Out of a total of 623 police officers trained so far, only 15 are women.

In the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement (DDRRR) programme, our major challenge was to gain the understanding of DDRRR personnel that women's concerns were an integral part of all activities, especially demobilization. There are women commanders and combatants in the various militia. A package was also developed on gender and vulnerable groups with the message that behind every combatant, there was usually a woman. A policy paper on gender and DDRRR was circulated to the DDRRR office with recommendations on the need to take women's concerns into consideration in policy conceptualization, as well as in implementation and monitoring.

During the setting up of the temporary Reception Centre in Lubero, as well as with the Kamina exercise, the Senior Gender Advisor and staff, together with other female colleagues from child protection, human rights and humanitarian affairs, served in technical committees and worked with DDRRR colleagues. This strategic outreach was a breakthrough because combatants as well as dependants presented themselves for the DDRRR programme, demonstrating the link between gender and DDRRR.

I turn now to activities outside the Mission. The first major political activity on the inception of the gender Office was to support women in the inter-Congolese dialogue in Sun City. This was done by sensitizing them to resolution 1325 (2000), which was translated into the four major languages of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The strategy resulted in the formulation of a plan of action, the Nairobi Declaration, that was going to be used by

Congolese women as their bargaining tool to allow them access to participate in the negotiations.

Following this, the gender Office, in very close collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, held several training sessions with women in readiness for their participation in the Sun City negotiations, to which only a few women had originally been invited as delegates. Because of this poor representation of women as delegates to the negotiations, it was decided that an alternative way of increasing the number would be to invite other women to participate as experts. Thus, a total of 74, comprising 37 women delegates and 37 women experts, were able to work alongside the majority 516 men to bring the women's perspective to the negotiation process. It is widely accepted by both men and women that the participation of women in the inter-Congolese dialogue in the corridors, at commissions, as well as in plenary helped resolve and unravel difficult impasses during negotiations.

The outcome of the Sun City resolutions, especially the recommendations of the Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Commission, reflects the voices of the women in the negotiations. In addition, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Transitional Constitution took into account some of the women's concerns and the need to have them play a role in decision-making, as is evident in article 51 of the Transitional Constitution. Unfortunately, however, the constitutional provision was very vague and did not go far enough in reflecting international instruments, such as the Beijing Platform for Action, that are very specific concerning women's representation in decision-making. The reality is that, in the transitional period, so far only 7 per cent of the representatives in Government, Parliament, the Senate and the institutions supporting democracy are women, whilst 93 per cent are men.

We have also developed a network of partners, including La Dynamique des femmes politiques au Congo démocratique (DYNAFEP), which represents women from all factions and political parties. They have been articulating the political views of women on the evolution of the transition process and working to increase women's involvement and participation in the elections through press conferences and other media activities.

Recently, an assessment was made of the first 100 days of the Transitional Government. The key issues of concern were identified as follows: security, immediate and long-term; national unity and the establishment of democratic governance throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo; sexual violence against women and impunity; women's representation in the transition and elections; and post-conflict issues, including the return of displaced persons and refugees, with special reference to women and girls.

An important tool for monitoring women's involvement in the peace process and transition has been a fortnightly forum of experience-sharing, facilitated by the gender unit, with partners in civil society, including the media, MONUC personnel and employees of the Government. Several key issues that have been discussed, reflect similar concerns raised by DYNAFEP.

Sexual violence is one of the major tragedies of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The police will have to play an important role in this area. In the eastern DRC, data being collected by MONUC, colleagues in the agencies and the local communities reveal that tens, if not hundreds of thousands of girls and women are being raped as a result of the conflict. It is believed — on the basis of local sources — that in the town of Uvira alone, in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, about 20 per cent of all women and girls have been raped. A constitutional provision setting up legal mechanisms to document women's experiences and address impunity is now in place. However, expediting the processes will enhance healing for the victims. It will also assure victims that, despite the lack of the rule of law for the time being in a place like Bunia, justice will eventually prevail.

The success of the Gender Unit will be judged by the heritage we leave behind for the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to emulate. After 18 months, it is too early to make any claims. However, we can draw some key conclusions.

First, the foundation has been laid to ensure that the concerns of both men and women are reflected in the resolution of the conflict.

Secondly, networking within and outside the Mission and the use of creative means are leading to attitudinal changes about women's role in establishing peace. They are also leading to a greater understanding

of gender mainstreaming. More of that will need to be seen in the post-conflict and reconstruction era.

Thirdly, although comprised of a small team of officers, the Office of Gender Affairs has since March 2002 creatively used the limited human and material resources at its disposal to implement its mandate and that of the Mission.

In conclusion, I should like to set out, by way of recommendation, the following priority action points that have emerged from our experience over the last 18 months.

I begin with Security Council visits. The positive impact of field visits, both psychologically and otherwise, is tremendous. Missions to the field from Headquarters should see women as much as they do men, listen to them and report back on their concerns, so that decisions and policies will reflect the realities and interests of both men and women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The second point concerns appropriate staffing of gender units. If gender mainstreaming is to succeed in peacekeeping operations, it should start from the Headquarters level and proceed to the field. In that regard, the recent establishment of the position of gender adviser in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is welcome. It is hoped that that person will receive adequate support to influence policy decisions at the highest level and to support field missions. At the same time, recruiting and adequately supporting gender advisers at a sufficiently high level in field missions will enable them to influence decision-making at all levels, so that effective use can be made of a mission's resources, to the satisfaction of the population as well as other stakeholders.

Thirdly, with regard to female military observers and civilian police, troop- and police-contributing countries should ensure that there is a substantial proportion of women among personnel recruited for peacekeeping operations, including civilian police and military observers. We have come to realize that it may be necessary to review the recruitment criteria in order to enable women to be identified for field missions.

The Security Council should hold national Governments accountable for implementing gender-related provisions in peace accords, to guarantee women's participation in all decision-making arrangements. Above all, the all-pervasive cultures of impunity, including impunity for violence of all kinds against women, must come to an end.

The President: I thank Ms. Smythe very much for her comments and observations, and commend her for the work that she has been doing. I know that I speak for all Council members when I say how valuable it is to us to be able to hear the first-hand experience of one of the observers of this very important issue in the field.

I shall now call on members of the Council. The first speaker is Ms. Kerstin Müller, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Ms. Müller (Germany): First I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I would also like in particular to thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Ms. Smythe for their excellent contributions to today's debate.

Allow me to express Germany's full support for the statement to be delivered later by the presidency of the European Union.

Germany, a relatively new member of the group of friends of resolution 1325 (2000), particularly welcomes the opportunity to contribute some ideas concerning the implementation of that landmark resolution in the field of peacekeeping operations. We recognize the great political and practical value of the resolution as well as the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report (S/2002/1154) of October 2002 on women, peace and security, with regard to its implementation.

Much has been said about the terrible toll women have paid, and continue to pay, in conflict situations, for which they are largely not responsible. In that context, I would also point out the importance of including gender-related crimes and crimes of sexual violence in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

My Government is convinced that the full and active participation of women in all political and economic decision-making, including peace processes, is a prerequisite for improving the current situation. Women are also indispensable agents in the process of building democratic structures and strengthening civil society.

Much remains to be done to implement the thrust of resolution 1325 (2000). Whether in the context of

approving peacekeeping mandates or reviewing the impact of sanctions, gender implications must be an integral part of the analysis and decisions of the Council. Unfortunately, that has not always been the case. Past Council resolutions, particularly those concerning the Middle East region, have too seldom included the necessary provisions. Sooner rather than later, we should guarantee that a gender perspective is fully integrated into resolutions and mandates.

Resolution 1325 (2000) is only credible if it is set as a benchmark, and therefore visibly implemented by the peacekeeping forces. For example, each female soldier or police officer patrolling with her male colleagues in the streets of Kabul demonstrates to the local population the aim of resolution 1325 (2000) better than any general informational efforts could. Therefore, Germany attaches great importance to adequate representation of female soldiers in the German contingents.

Germany will be leading a Security Council mission to Afghanistan in the coming days. We firmly intend to take up — in close cooperation with our Afghan partners — the gender perspective and to encourage them to provide for stronger involvement of women in decision-making processes, inter alia by discussing concrete measures that should be taken in order to improve the situation. We would like to ensure that the final report from the mission properly reflects this aspect.

Support for women's human rights and women's empowerment in all spheres of life and decision-making is an overarching objective of all German projects in Afghanistan. Hence we take gender mainstreaming issues into account in all our projects, and support the equal participation of women, particularly in the fields of human rights, constitutional reform, training of police forces, access to the administration and education.

We welcome the very recent nomination of the assistant to the Senior Gender Adviser of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and express our sincere wish that the post of Senior Gender Adviser be filled shortly. We welcome the encouraging developments and acknowledge the important contribution that gender advisers can make. We must ensure that the post of gender adviser is tailored in a way that also attracts high-ranking United Nations personnel.

In peace operations, special gender advisers have been nominated as part of the human rights section. We understand that cooperation between the gender advisers and other human rights personnel has been very productive. Yet we note that resolution 1325 (2000) provides for a much broader mandate, including nation-building, security, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and economic and humanitarian affairs. Recent peace-building experience has shown that national ownership of the processes involved is critical to their success. Facilitating the active participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict management in all relevant forums therefore commands the additional attention not only of all United Nations personnel, but of the Council as well.

In closing, let me underline the important role of non-governmental organizations regarding women's participation and empowerment in conflict resolution, peace and post-conflict rehabilitation processes. The active involvement of civil society should be further encouraged and supported.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Guéhenno, for his comprehensive briefing on the mandate and role of the gender advisers in peacekeeping operations in implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. I also thank Ms. Amy Smythe for the information on her experiences in the field that she conveyed to the Council.

That we are meeting today on the third anniversary of the Council's adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security reflects clearly the Security Council's ongoing interest in the role of women in peace and security, in conflict and post-conflict situations. This sends a clear message about the need to mobilize efforts and generate the necessary interest at the international level to deal with this issue.

The recommendations in the report (S/2002/1154) of the Secretary-General, issued last year in response to resolution 1325 (2000), reflect an important examination of the impact of armed conflict on women and of the role of women in peace-building. Those recommendations constitute a step towards

consolidating the achievements made so far and dealing with current challenges.

In that regard, we recall that resolution 1325 (2000) dealt not only with the question of peacekeeping operations, but also with many other issues, such as respect for international law, the rights of women and girls and their protection during armed conflict. We reaffirm the importance of the recommendations adopted at United Nations conferences concerning women, the last of which was the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in 2000. They all constitute milestones in the march towards promoting and strengthening the status and role of women in the economic, social and political spheres.

Resolution 1325 (2000) underscores the fact that women and children account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict. This is attributed to the fact that they are the most vulnerable groups in societies and make soft targets for attacks. We also underline that in times of armed conflict and foreign occupation, women are deprived of their most basic rights, let alone their right to participate in political decision-making. The situation of Palestinian women in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is a case in point.

In that regard, we reaffirm the need to respect international humanitarian law and the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in particular women and children, referred to in operative paragraph 9 of resolution 1325 (2000). However, the content of that paragraph has not been heeded by the occupying Power in the occupied Syrian Golan and the occupied Palestinian territories.

My delegation believes that we should stress the importance of taking specific steps to implement resolution 1325 (2000), including the need for all peace agreements to deal with the outcome and impact of armed conflict on women and girls, their participation in the peace process and their priority needs once conflict has ended. It is also necessary to integrate the gender perspective in the mandates of peacekeeping operations and deal with this issue in the reports to the Security Council. In addition, there is a need to make available the necessary financial and human resources to integrate women and girls, and not to be content with paying lip service to that objective. We also believe that the United Nations agencies must have unhindered access to all areas and people — in particular women and girls — in need of their assistance.

Since education and work are of crucial importance for the liberation of women and the necessary advancement of girls, it is acutely necessary to identify the legal and social barriers that deny women education and work and prevent them from contributing to economic construction; then, clear and necessary strategies and plans in that field must be prepared.

We would also stress that it is of extreme importance to pay attention to the needs of women and girls as ex-combatants in post-conflict situations. There should be more programmes for women and girl ex-combatants in order to create a more favourable environment for them after the conflict and ensure their safe return to the productive workforce in society and to a decent life.

Finally, the delegation of Syria hopes that resolution 1325 (2000), as well as this debate held by the Security Council, will present a serious opportunity to consider the major problems that women suffer from in general and that women and girls in conflict situations suffer from in particular, in order to put an end to their suffering and to move towards a society of equality, progress and peace.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like to express the Pakistani delegation's appreciation to you for convening this open debate to mark the third anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The resolution elevated women from being hapless victims of conflict situations to equal stakeholders in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in the rehabilitation of post conflict situations. Today's meeting provides us with an opportunity to review the progress and to advance the implementation of this resolution.

Human rights instruments — particularly the Geneva Conventions — proscribe torture, violence, rape and other forms of sexual violence and ill-treatment of women during conflicts. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court pronounces these acts in the context of armed conflict as crimes against humanity. These injunctions notwithstanding, women's suffering in conflict situations has continued. Despite growing awareness of their plight and increased focus

on their protection, women continue to be the prime victims of calamities — both natural and man-made — in conflict situations.

Mention has been made here of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Afghanistan and other places. You will understand if I, on my part, address specifically the plight of women in a conflict that affects a people who are close to the hearts of the Pakistani people.

The suffering of women in the ongoing freedom struggle in Jammu and Kashmir is symbolic of the suffering of women worldwide. The Indian army uses rape in this deeply conservative society as a weapon to punish, intimidate, coerce, humiliate and degrade Kashmiri women. Investigations by human rights groups into allegations of gang rape by the Indian security forces show that it has been used routinely in search-and-cordon operations. There is generally a pattern of impunity and non-accountability when it comes to incidents of rape or violence. Investigations are more a cover-up than an inquiry.

Human rights organizations have testified that in Jammu and Kashmir, since 1992, rape and ill-treatment of women are usually reported to have taken place during counter-insurgency operations by Indian forces. The Asia Watch and Physicians for Human Rights have documented the extensive use of rape by the occupation forces designed to punish and humiliate the entire community. Amnesty International has reported that harassment, abduction, rape and deliberate and arbitrary killings perpetrated by pro-Indian renegades in Kashmir are also carried out with the support of the Indian security forces.

We would hope that, like other peacekeeping operations mentioned by Mr. Guéhenno, the United Nations Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan will also be tasked to report to the Security Council on the conditions of women in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), like other resolutions of the Security Council, cannot be promoted on a selective and discriminatory basis.

There are thousands of destitute women in Kashmir, illustrating this manifestation of a brutal conflict. They include women who have been widowed, or whose husbands have been maimed, or who have disappeared, or those who are in arbitrary detention. We urge the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to prepare a survey of the number of such destitute Kashmiri women. The international community should take appropriate measures to provide help and compensation to these women.

We urge the humanitarian agencies, especially the International Committee of the Red Cross, to act as the instrument and avenue for such relief distribution. Political considerations and the power of certain countries should not stand in the way of international humanitarian agencies responding to the plight of the Kashmiri women and children suffering from the long and bloody conflict that has been inflicted on their homeland.

Unfortunately, such crimes against women do not remain limited to situations of armed conflicts. A pattern of targeted violence against women in situations of communal disturbance within national borders has also been witnessed. Very little is said of last year's anti-Muslim violence in the Indian state of Gujarat, which saw abhorrent illustration of the crimes against women. The report of Human Rights Watch has extensively documented these crimes, which included gang rape, burning women alive, other methods of murder and the murder of unborn babies. In Afghanistan, where the destitution of women was a pervasive consequence of two decades of conflict, violence against women has been used as a tool to terrorize populations, force displacement and demoralize adversaries.

By adopting resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council reaffirmed its deep concern at such violence against women in armed conflict. It also acknowledged women's possible positive contribution in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in post-conflict consolidation and rehabilitation. The need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping has been affirmed.

We thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for his briefing on the Department of Peacekeeping Operations' efforts to implement resolution 1325 (2000) in United Nations peacekeeping missions. We also thank Ms. Amy Smythe, Senior Gender Adviser to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), for sharing with us her experience in the implementation of the resolution. These two presentations to the

Council give us an insight into the normative and operational implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The best way to protect women from the scourge of armed conflict is to prevent and resolve conflicts. The Security Council, as the organ of the United Nations responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, must strengthen its capacity to prevent such conflicts and to resolve them. We must also stress the observance and implementation of the principles of international humanitarian law and human rights in international conflicts.

We believe the Council must not only ensure prompt and effective responses to crisis situations, irrespective of their geographical locations, but also avoid selectivity in the implementation of its resolutions. We need greater international solidarity, responsibility and respect for the collective decisions of the United Nations and the determination to implement them. The Charter contains provisions, including in Chapter VI, which can be utilized for the purpose of promoting implementation of Council resolutions.

At last year's open meeting of the Council to discuss women and armed conflict, my delegation suggested a few measures for the Council's consideration, which we believe are still valid and applicable.

The first is adopting a declaration that the targeting of women — especially the use of rape as an instrument of war — will be considered a war crime, susceptible to national and international punishment.

The second is initiating a study of recent and ongoing conflict situations to identify crimes committed against women, with a view to seeking redress and compensation for the victims.

The third is requiring current and future United Nations peacekeeping operations to monitor, and report regularly to the Security Council, on the situation of women and girls in their mission areas.

The fourth is promoting the fullest possible participation by women in peace processes as well in post-conflict peace-building, including in the reintegration, reconstruction and rehabilitation of societies in post-conflict phases.

The fifth is requiring United Nations specialized organs and agencies to develop ways to address the special needs of women and girls affected by conflict, including health and psychological care.

The sixth is the Security Council's involving other United Nations bodies as well as representatives of civil society — perhaps using the Arria Formula — in a comprehensive discussion to promote such recommendations and actions.

We believe that those actions should be undertaken in the Security Council's follow-up to resolution 1325 (2000).

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I thank you, Mr. President, for initiating and convening this meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Ms. Smythe for their very informative briefings, which assist us greatly in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and of the current and future challenges facing us. The recommendations they set forth are also very enlightening and deserve study by the Security Council.

Three years ago, the Security Council discussed the issue of women, peace and security for the first time and adopted resolution 1325 (2000). That very important resolution expresses great concern at the immense harm caused to women by armed conflicts and calls on the international community to adopt measures to protect the rights and interests of women in armed conflicts, to support their participation in the conflict resolution process and to encourage them to play an important role in peacekeeping operations.

The adoption of this resolution marked a historic step taken by the international community in protecting the rights and interests of women in armed conflicts and in providing an active role for women in conflict resolution. Today, it has already become a very important guide for the international community in carrying out related work and a very important reference document for the Council with regard to deploying peacekeeping missions.

Over the three years since the resolution's adoption, the United Nations Secretariat, the relevant peacekeeping missions, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women have all worked long and hard to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and have achieved many positive results.

Today, in many conflict areas, protecting women's rights and interests and enabling them to play a role in conflict resolution has already become very important work for peacekeeping operations. The Missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo have intensified their fight against the trafficking in women and have adopted special measures to protect its victims. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, peacekeeping staff have improved their capacities, through the training and sensitization process, to protect women against violent attack and to address the peacetime reintegration of women soldiers. In Timor-Leste, women are playing an increasingly important role in their country's reconstruction. Their representation in the Government and Parliament is already near 30 per cent. We welcome those positive developments. We hope that the United Nations and the relevant agencies can summarize those successful experiences and apply them to other peacekeeping operations.

In order to further implement resolution 1325 (2000), the international community still has much work to do. In that regard, I should like to emphasize the following three points.

First, the Security Council should intensify its conflict prevention and resolution efforts to essentially protect women from the harm of war while protecting their rights and interests as much as possible.

Secondly, violent crimes against women must be addressed within the framework of law, and the Governments of the countries concerned are duty-bound to seriously pursue such cases and bring the criminals to justice. Parties to conflicts must comply with international humanitarian law and adopt special measures aimed at protecting women from violent attack. In addition, we support the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy with regard to peacekeeping personnel, and we call on troop-contributing countries to improve the training and supervision of their peacekeeping staffs that they truly comply with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Code of Conduct.

Thirdly, the role played by women in conflict settlement cannot be neglected; in some conflict areas, it has even become essential. Therefore, we support participation by women in all phases of the peace process. We hope that Security Council missions and all parties concerned will undertake further efforts to create conditions conducive to more extensive and in-depth participation by women in that regard.

In conclusion, lasting peace cannot be realized without participation by women. The Beijing Declaration, adopted in 1995, says:

> "Local, national, regional and global peace is attainable and is inextricably linked with the advancement of women, who are a fundamental force for leadership, conflict resolution and the promotion of lasting peace at all levels".

China has always attached importance to the protection of women's rights and interests and to the advancement of women. We shall continue to work together with the international community for the genuine achievement of the objectives set forth in resolution 1325 (2000).

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important meeting, which enables us to assess the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). I should also like to thank the countries — particularly Germany and the Netherlands — that had the good will to be represented at the ministerial level at this meeting, thus emphasizing the importance of the subject under consideration.

The briefings presented by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno and Ms. Amy Smythe at the beginning of our discussion were extremely useful, because both speakers refused to employ the jargon sometimes used in this field. Their view of the reality on the ground is not complacent, but also not resigned. I thank them for their recommendations, and — as the representative of China just said — the Security Council should take those recommendations seriously into account and follow up on them.

As a country associated with the European Union (EU), Bulgaria aligns itself fully with the statement to be made later by the representative of Italy — which holds the presidency — on behalf of the Union.

The adoption three years ago of resolution 1325 (2000) clearly represented a significant success in the international community's efforts to ensure that the role of women in preventing and resolving armed conflicts is not underestimated. The resolution provides a very important legal framework for action by the Council, but we should not stop there. It must be said that the results of its implementation are meagre indeed.

Women and children still constitute the majority of civilian victims of armed conflict. They are subjected to every form of violence and trafficking, a situation that can no longer be tolerated.

Women are not just victims of violence. They are often the driving force for peace. Here I think of two personal experiences which greatly impressed me during Security Council missions to conflict areas. The first was in Bunia, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the mission met the President of the Ituri interim assembly, Ms. Petronille Vaweka, an extraordinary woman whose courage and determination impressed all the members of the Council who took part in that mission. She is an example of how a courageous woman of great moral stature can help her fellow citizens. Meeting her was an unforgettable experience for me. Secondly, an image comes to mind of a meeting of the Security Council mission in Mitrovica, Kosovo, with a local Serbian women's organization, whose wisdom and willingness to help the inhabitants of that divided city and bring them together impressed everyone.

Those personal recollections prompt me to think of one very important aspect of the activities of the Security Council, and the United Nations in general, in implementing resolution 1325 (2000): very close cooperation with women's organizations and networks, which exist in all conflict areas. Such cooperation has proved to be very useful. We need to move forward along those lines. I believe that peacekeeping missions are becoming increasingly aware of this and are benefiting from it more and more.

It is also important for women to participate at all stages in peace negotiations — preparation, planning, decision-making and implementation. Women should be the subjects, not just the objects, of peace efforts.

In conclusion, I emphasize that Bulgaria hopes that the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) will be implemented on the ground in all the missions that the Council establishes and provides with a mandate.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the initiative of the United States delegation in convening this public debate on women and peace and security.

I thank the Under-Secretary-General for his detailed briefing, and welcome his personal involvement in this issue. I listened with great interest to the statement of Ms. Amy Smythe about the application on the ground in the Democratic Republic of the Congo of the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000).

France fully aligns itself with the statement to be made later by the representative of Italy — which holds the presidency of the European Union — on behalf of the Union.

I begin by welcoming the progress made during the past year. Last year we recommended the creation of the post of adviser on gender issues within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. I am pleased to note that that proposal was adopted. I encourage the Department to develop its local network of advisers on gender issues. It is also essential that advisers with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, the United Nations Mission in Liberia and shortly, I hope, the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, coordinate their activities so as to ensure a better understanding of the regional dimension of the problem. Reports to the Council should include as often as possible information on the situation of women and children. I invite the Department and the Office of Ms. Angela King — to whom I pay tribute — to cooperate closely on the common objectives set out in resolution 1325 (2000).

The challenges regarding the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) are not to the Secretary-General and the Security Council alone. They must be addressed by the entire United Nations system, in a spirit of cooperation and with imagination. They must be addressed on a daily basis, not just once a year during our commemorative debate. It is all well and good to commemorate the anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), but its provisions must be implemented in every new mandate and United Nations operation. We must continually try to increase the role and contribution of women on the ground in United Nations operations, particularly as military observers, members of civilian police forces, human rights specialists and members of humanitarian operations.

Much remains to be done. In his report (A/58/323) on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Secretary-General stated clearly that the differential impact of conflict on women called for more effective responses from the international community. Here I highlight three key words: prevention, justice and participation.

First, with regard to prevention, I think of all the young women and girls who suffer as a result of conflict. Even if they do not lose their lives, their childhood is stolen from them. How does such a person get her life together again? What can she do in order to re-weave the fabric of collective life? We will soon be dealing with the question of child soldiers. France will propose a draft resolution. I will personally make sure that our debates address very precisely the specific question of the reintegration of girl soldiers.

Secondly, with regard to justice, women must not only be the beneficiaries of, but must take an active part in, the fight against impunity.

In this regard, I would like to call attention to the advances that have been made in connection with the establishment of the International Criminal Court. The Rome Statute, through its dual aspects of prevention and punishment, is a key element in the protection of women. It is innovative in that it recognizes for the first time that certain acts of sexual violence are among the most odious of crimes punishable under international law. But the International Criminal Court sets an example in another respect as well, since it is one of the most feminized institutions among all the international courts. This precedent deserves to be noted, and I encourage each of us to draw inspiration from it.

Lastly, and most importantly, let me touch on the issue of participation. We all are convinced that the stabilization and reconstruction of societies undermined by conflict cannot be lastingly successful without the active participation of women in public life. Indeed, that is one of the central themes of the Beijing Platform for Action. Accordingly, Security Council missions in the field should always include contacts with women's associations.

During our most recent mission to Central Africa, I was struck — as was Ambassador Tafrov, as he has just noted — by the dynamism of the women we met. We all were impressed by the commitment shown by Ms. Petronille Vaweka, President of the Ituri interim assembly. Such examples deserve to be better known and appreciated, for they can change the way people think and inspire them. I wish therefore to pay tribute to all those women who are not resigned to the status quo and who look to the future. Let me recall here the example of Ms. Lindh, whose political commitment cost her her life.

The challenges faced in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) are a matter of collective responsibility — on the part of international organizations, States and civil society. In that respect, I would be interested in knowing Ms. Smythe's assessment of the relations between the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the various Congolese administrations concerned with gender issues, in particular the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Family and the Ministry of Human Rights.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his comprehensive and informative briefing and also to underscore his personal interest in and commitment to this issue.

Let me begin by emphasizing a fact mentioned earlier by other speakers. Regrettably, recent decades have witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of women victims of armed conflict. It is estimated that today approximately 90 per cent of the victims of war are civilians, most of them women and children, which was not the case a century ago. It is true that, from the international standpoint, many measures have been taken relating to the treatment of crimes against women. Rape has thus been included in the list of crimes against humanity under the statutes of the courts relating to the former Yugoslavia and to Rwanda; the International Criminal Court has included a gender perspective in its definition of crimes; and the Beijing Conference reiterated the commitment of the international community to eradicate crimes against women in armed conflict.

Although those developments are a source of hope, much remains to be done. The decisive role that women can play in peace processes must also be taken into account.

My delegation is aware of the fact that, along with international commitments, a strategy is required that would ensure women's participation at the national level in the settlement of disputes and in the promotion of a culture of peace. However, measures must also be taken to promote the participation of women in all conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution processes.

In this connection, my country has expanded women's participation as observers in electoral processes throughout the world and as participants in post-conflict reconstruction processes. Spanish military contingents participating in peace operations include

increasing numbers of women. Moreover, Spain deems it particularly important in this respect for the media to play an important role in pre- and post-conflict periods, both nationally and internationally.

All of this confirms the fact that, in addition to the commitment of the international community, domestic measures must also be adopted so that, together with Governments, civil society as a whole and non-governmental organizations can make valuable contributions to the two key aspects of women's participation in peace-building: on the one hand, by protecting women who are the victims of conflict, and, on the other, by promoting the participation of women in the building of a culture of peace. This work cannot be done without the necessary coordination within the United Nations system to fulfil the important commitments entered into in resolution 1325 (2000), adopted three years ago.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Approximately a year has elapsed since the Secretary-General submitted to us his report containing a large number of recommendations, which we firmly supported, but it seems that progress towards their implementation has not been as positive as we expected.

I will begin my statement by quoting verbatim an excerpt from that report, which we believe to be particularly significant because it explains in simple terms the situation we are dealing with at this meeting and which has given rise to this and other discussions.

> "Women do not enjoy equal status with men in any society. Where cultures of violence and discrimination against women and girls exist prior to conflict, they will be exacerbated during conflict. If women do not participate in the decision-making structures of a society, they are unlikely to become involved in decisions about the conflict or the peace process that follows." *(S/2002/1154, para. 5)*

We fully concur with this statement, since it makes clear that, in order to achieve the full participation of women in all stages of a conflict situation, from prevention to reconstruction, it is necessary to approach the problem from a broader perspective in which gender equity is achieved in all areas of action.

Why the failure to achieve gender balance and equity? No consensus has been reached on the various explanations put forward. In the framework of a recent seminar held last November in Chile on the role of women in peacekeeping operations, reference was made to various perspectives on this topic. Some say that the problem is that women have greater difficulty in advancing within a static, rigidly hierarchical organization; others hold that the culture of an organization determines what is believed regarding what men and women can achieve. If it is believed that a job can be done only by a man, women will not be expected to succeed. Others say that it is a cultural problem, in that women are not seen as providers — that men are the primary providers.

As the Secretary-General said a few years ago, if we accept that in a given society gender equality is more than a means in itself, if we believe that the empowerment of women is vital for overcoming the challenges of sustainable development, if we argue that the participation of women is a requirement for building good governance, if we insist that the rights of women are factors in the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, if we are convinced of all these things in the context of all the societies we are trying to help at the global level, how then can we be incapable of implementing this very concept in our own society, including within our own home?

The time has come to bridge the gap between paper and reality. Among the many, extensive discussions, almost all aspects have been addressed on including the gender perspective in the phases of all peace processes, because there is much information on the problems of women and girls in the field — their strengths and weaknesses. However, in practice we have not known how, or have not been able, to implement those aspects.

We believe that one of paths that should be taken to achieve full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is to seek and develop effective monitoring mechanisms to enable more systematic control of implementation. If we had them, perhaps we would have a clearer view of what was achieved a year ago.

I wish to raise one of the proposals made last year by the representative of the United Kingdom, which was to request one member of the Council each year to oversee the implementation of our decisions on including the gender perspective, working with the

relevant Secretariat bodies to achieve that objective. Perhaps this is the time to explore that type of initiative. My country, at least, is willing to participate in that exercise. Consideration could also be given to a specific chapter devoted to gender-related items connected with resolution 1325 (2000) being included in the reports submitted by the Secretariat on peacekeeping operations.

The proposals made at the seminar held in Chile included some interesting ideas that I wish to raise here. One concerned developing regional perspectives to identify implementation strategies for the resolution. In that regard, appropriate regional bodies, inside as well as outside the United Nations system, could help with implementation.

Another proposal at the seminar was that mechanisms be developed for systematic linkage between the Security Council and civil society. The creation of a gender unit within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was also suggested, and we are glad that it has become a reality, as announced by Mr. Guéhenno.

With regard to civil society, I wish only to reiterate that the task of achieving full implementation of this crucial resolution is shared: Governments, the United Nations system, of course, and civil society will contribute. We must emphasize civil society in particular because many women's networks working in the field, selflessly and devotedly, have played an absolutely crucial role, at least in my country, in improving the condition of women.

In peacekeeping operations, which have moved from inter-State conflicts to intra-State conflicts with economic, social or ethnic root causes, there is much to be done so that the United Nations, particularly the Council, may progressively improve its ability to respond and continue to develop mechanisms to address these situations. Ensuring that women have their due role to play in this process is a priority commitment. The delegation of Chile reiterates its commitment to achieve that goal, jointly with the other members of the Council.

Mrs. Arce de Jeannet (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, for his briefing, and to Ms. Amy Smythe for her briefing on her work with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which gives us a clearer idea of the resolution's impact and possible impact on the ground, as we were able to see when the Council mission to the Great Lakes region visited Kinshasa and Bunia last June.

The experience gained by MONUC can be very useful in addressing the specific needs of Liberian women and children and can help the personnel of the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

We also welcome Mrs. Angela King, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, and of Mrs. Noleen Hayzer, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

The third anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) gives us an opportunity to speak once again on a matter to which the Government of Mexico attaches great importance — the inclusion of the gender perspective in dealing with armed conflict and post-conflict situations, peace processes and peacekeeping operations. We believe that the resolution is part of a broader effort to include the gender perspective in all areas of the work of the United Nations, as well as within the Organization itself. This is an effort that goes back to the World Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975.

That is the point of including gender perspective in the areas of responsibility of the main organs of our Organization. The line that separates peacekeeping tasks and processes of peace consolidation and development is so thin that this matter requires wider cooperation and greater coordination between the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat.

In the past two years, my delegation has participated actively in the group of friends of resolution 1325 (2000), and it will continue to be a part of it. As friends of the resolution, we have on more than one occasion proposed the inclusion of references to it, or of aspects related to it, in Security Council draft resolutions on the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations. In the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, we have consistently spoken in favour of including the gender perspective in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We support the creation of the position of Gender Adviser within the Department of Peacekeeping

Operations, which represents, finally, an important success. We hope that it will be filled as soon as possible.

There has been some progress in including the gender perspective in field missions, particularly with regard to the inclusion of gender specialists. However, relatively few missions have such personnel. We are particularly surprised by the case of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which needed a gender specialist for a long time. However, we understand that that situation has just been resolved. As we all know, the high level civil service posts at the national, regional and international levels continue to be dominated by men. This situation is repeated in United Nations peacekeeping operations. It is essential for Member States to propose more women as candidates for the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Currently, only one of them is a woman.

At the same time, we must increase the participation of women at the middle and operational levels in peacekeeping operations, particularly in the military and civilian police components.

Regarding the work of the Security Council, much still remains to be done to ensure that the question of gender is considered systematically when framing resolutions and that it is dealt with as a central matter in questions of international peace and security, and not as a marginal issue.

Statistics provided by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) demonstrates the work that remains to be done. Only 14.7 per cent of Security Council resolutions adopted since 2000 include any reference to the topic. OSAGI also indicates that 67 per cent of the reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council omit the gender question entirely, or perhaps make a single reference. A profound change in mindset is needed, on the part of both Member States of this Organization and the Secretariat.

In the area of international law, an important achievement is the classification under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of certain acts of sexual violence as war crimes or crimes against humanity. This is fully in keeping with the contents of resolution 1325 (2000). We also acknowledge that particular attention has been given to gender equality in setting up the ICC.

The active participation of civil society organizations has been a very positive element, not only in the framing of resolution 1325 (2000), but also, in particular, in the process that began once it was adopted. Non-governmental organizations view that resolution as a useful tool for promoting gender issues within the context of armed conflicts, in peace processes, in the post-conflict rebuilding of societies, in the very important sphere of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and in our fight to eradicate the illicit traffic of small arms and for the total elimination of antipersonnel mines.

It is important that in the follow-up to resolution 1325 (2000), the Security Council maintain good channels of communication with non-governmental organizations, particularly with those in countries or regions where there is an intention to establish, or where there already exist, United Nations peace operations.

By way of conclusion, we would like to put forward two suggestions. First, it is important for the Security Council to consider the appropriateness of setting up a mechanism to follow up the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the recommendations contained in the study carried out on women, peace and security, by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and in the study on women, war and peace commissioned by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Secondly, perhaps an additional resolution could be adopted on this topic of women and peace and security, keeping in mind the fact that in October 2004 the Secretary-General will submit his second report under this item. While it is true that resolution 1325 (2000) has not yet realized its full potential and indeed that a great deal needs to be done to ensure its implementation, we think a new resolution would serve to update and supplement resolution 1325 (2000) and keep the attention of the Security Council and the attention of the membership of the United Nations at large focused on this issue.

Mr. Karev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The date 31 October 2003 marks the third anniversary of the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1325 (2000). During those years it has been possible to achieve a great deal in resolving an important range of issues linked to women's

contribution to maintaining and strengthening international peace and security, to the situation of women during conflicts and to their participation in peacekeeping and post-conflict settlement.

We would like to thank Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno and Ms. Amy Smythe for the detailed information they gave us about how the implementation of the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) is being carried out. We note with satisfaction the progress made in the work to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of measures in this area in the light of changing trends and new conditions for introducing gender issues into all aspects of United Nations activities.

The problem of the protection of women in armed conflict continues to remain a focus of attention of the United Nations and its Security Council. However, despite such focused attention to these problems, and the acknowledgement of their existence, we are obliged to note that overcoming their negative consequences requires that considerable effort still be made. Unfortunately, many recommendations still remain on paper and others are not being fully implemented.

Here, we place great hope in the continuing inter-agency activity to formulate concrete practical measures for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), in particular to improve the protection of women and girls during conflict, strengthen their participation in peace-building and ensure the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into the various components of peacekeeping operations. The most important thing here is to avoid excessively broad and clichéd conclusions and recommendations. But drawing up wide-ranging and comprehensive approaches should not work to the detriment of a solution to specific and concrete problems in a given situation.

At the same time, we cannot forget that measures undertaken solely through the United Nations are insufficient. There is a need for real, and not merely stated action, taking into account the specific needs of women and girls in actual conflict situations and their real participation at all stages of the prevention and settlement of conflicts and in post-conflict peace-building.

An important contribution to resolving the entire range of problems can be played by civil society, including non-governmental organizations, many of which have considerable experience regarding gender issues.

In conclusion, we would like once again to reaffirm our conviction that the problems of combating all manifestations of discrimination or violence against women, of the situation of women during conflict, and of their participation in peacekeeping and post-conflict settlement must be considered in a comprehensive manner and must remain on the agenda not only of the Security Council, but also of the other most important universal and regional international forums.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this public meeting today, which marks the third anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. This meeting eloquently attests to the Security Council's continuing interest in advancing the rights of women and their role for peace.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno and to pay a tribute to the Senior Gender Adviser of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ms. Amy Smythe, for their very rich, thorough and informative briefings. I would also like to welcome Ms. Angela King, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), who are honouring our debate with their presence.

Since the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) on 31 October 2000, genuine progress has been made by United Nations Member States and the international community at large in protecting women in conflict situations and advancing their full and complete participation on an equal basis in action to maintain and promote peace and security and to implement the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000).

Moreover, this public meeting provides us with the opportunity to assess the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the recommendations contained in the Security Council's presidential statement of 31 October 2002, contained in document S/PRST/2002/32. That statement, like that of 31 October 2001, reaffirms the Council's concern regarding the relatively low number of women

appointed as special representatives or envoys of the Secretary-General with peacekeeping missions. It also reaffirms the commitment of the Security Council to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and recommends a number of measures to the Secretary-General, United Nations bodies, civil society and interested players on a gender-specific approach in missions to countries in conflict, humanitarian operations and post-conflict and reconstruction programmes.

My delegation welcomes the fact that the study requested of the Secretary-General in paragraph 16 of resolution 1325 (2000) contains contributions from all the bodies, programmes and funds of the United Nations system. Such a comprehensive approach will clearly allow for the drafting or strengthening of measures to protect the rights of women and the greater involvement of women in peace and reconstruction processes. That objective is shared by Cameroon. On 28 October 2002, my delegation endorsed the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report contained in document S/2002/1154, particularly regarding strategies to advance partnership between men and women for the strengthening of the effectiveness of multidimensional peacekeeping operations.

As regards the progress that has been made, I note and welcome the establishment by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of gender equality groups and gender advisers within peacekeeping missions, as well as the appointment within the Department of a Gender Adviser. We also note the active cooperation, led by the Senior Gender Adviser of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with civil society and political parties to strengthen the capacities of women's organizations and their leaders and to allow them to play a greater role in the democratic process under way. In Sierra Leone, we welcome the efforts made by the human rights sections of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, through the actions of its expert on issues of gender inequality, to train and raise the awareness of the population on the special needs of women, their rights and the elimination of domestic and sexist violence.

With respect to justice, we welcome the measures undertaken and mechanisms established to ensure that the perpetrators of all acts of violence in which women and girls are victimized do not go unpunished. In this regard, I wish to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his description of the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and for his emphasis on the pending tasks. These are challenges we must meet together. I also thank Ms. Smythe for her information from the field and for her work therein, the results of which are clear.

Despite the progress, a great deal remains to be done towards the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). That implementation does not fall solely to the United Nations system. It requires the cooperation of all Member States, all parties to conflicts, civil society and the international community as a whole.

In that vein, a regional meeting was held in Douala in May last year, led by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and in cooperation with the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, on equality, development and the participation of women in Central Africa. The outcome of the work at that meeting, in which there was especially active participation by women and representatives of civil society from the subregion, was the adoption of a regional plan of action. In identifying certain obstacles to peace in Central Africa, the plan advocated a series of measures designed to achieve a tangible promotion of the role of women with respect to peace and security. Because of a lack of resources, its implementation was deferred to 2004. In this context, I appeal to contributors for technical, logistical and financial support for UNIFEM and women's community groups and networks whose initiatives share common goals with resolution 1325 (2000).

In Africa, women are the axes of family and social life. Everything revolves around and relies on women. Nothing solid or lasting can be accomplished without them. Let us pay due tribute to women and let them play their proper role in the maintenance and building of peace. Meeting the challenge of implementing resolution 1325 (2000) will open new opportunities for all humankind. With resolve and joint action, we will succeed.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks you, Sir, for having organized this meeting and for having included the item on women, peace and security on the Council's agenda during your presidency. This testifies to the interest you attach to

this issue and gives us hope that, under your wise guidance, our debates will lead to positive results.

We welcome the presence here of Ms. Angela King, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, and assure her of our readiness to engage in active cooperation with her Office. My delegation also listened with great interest to the statements made by Ms. Amy Smythe and Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno.

Commemorating the third anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) provides us with an opportunity to assess accomplishments, carefully to consider the challenges ahead and to find new approaches to its implementation. At the Council's public meeting of 28 October 2002, my delegation, while encouraging the Secretariat to strengthen its cooperation, particularly urged the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to pursue their consideration of the participation of women in those operations.

My delegation welcomes the valuable information provided to us today by Ms. Smythe and notes that inter-State conflicts have given rise to a new kind of violence, with particularly disastrous consequences for vulnerable individuals, in particular women, children and the elderly.

In that connection, the participation of civilians in armed combat — including women — the illegal use of small arms and the failure to respect international law, and international humanitarian law in particular, are among the factors having a negative impact on the lives of vulnerable individuals, especially women and girls. That is why my delegation welcomed the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), which was the result of a lengthy process and which represents a step forward for the international community.

We welcome that achievement, and believe that the following effects emanating from the resolution's adoption most eloquently illustrate the international community's commitment to the process of implementing the resolution. Those effects include, among others, the establishment of groups of friends of the resolution, the Secretary-General's submission of a report on the subject, the efforts of various members of the international community at all levels, the reference to this issue in 33 out of the 225 resolutions adopted between October 2000 and 1 October 2003, the initiative by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the role of women in exchanging weapons for development, the drafting by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of a code of conduct to combat sexual abuse in refugee camps, the establishment of the post of Gender Adviser within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the establishment of similar posts in several missions and the publication of a study by the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

The varying experiences acquired highlight the impact of conflict on women and girls, their participation in combat and their involvement in conflict-resolution and peace-building processes. We should also note the importance of issues concerning national and international legal frameworks, as well as the participation of women in peacekeeping operations.

While we welcome the progress that has been made, my delegation also believes that there is a need to continue to join efforts to further advance the implementation of the resolution. In doing so there is not only a need to coordinate the efforts of various actors, but also for them to share their experiences. The United Nations system has a fundamental role to play in that regard.

My delegation, which is prepared to make its modest contribution to that process, would once again like to cite the example of the women of West Africa, and in particular that of the women of the Mano River Union region, who, despite numerous difficulties, are continuing their active involvement in the conflict-resolution and peace-building processes. It is in that context that the Guinean branch of the Network of African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians (REFAMP) organized a subregional conference in Conakry from 24 to 26 January 2000 on the subject of the prevention and resolution of conflicts. In order to maintain that momentum and to follow up on the recommendations of the subregional consultative meeting on strengthening the participation of women in the establishment of peace, held in Addis Ababa from 23 to 25 April 2001, the Secretariat's Division for the Advancement of Women, in collaboration with the Centre for Conflict Resolution of Cape Town, South Africa, and the Government of Guinea, organized a training workshop in Conakry from 20 to 25 October 2002 on conflict management by women.

Those examples eloquently attest to the vital role played by the women of Guinea in seeking and strengthening peace in the subregion, and in particular in the countries of the Mano River Union. They are tirelessly working in various assistance activities on behalf of refugees and displaced persons, and especially on behalf of women and girls in distress. The international community should strengthen their determination to overcome every challenge and support the initiatives that have been undertaken.

My delegation believes that, despite the unique nature of the issue of women in armed conflict, there is a need to widen our thinking on this issue as part of the broader context of protecting civilians in armed conflict. The aide-memoire and road map now being finalized in that connection will serve as a point of reference in doing so.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that conflict prevention and resolution, peace-building and the establishment of new democratic forms of governance must be based on the active participation of women in all activities and at every level. It is for that reason that I hope that today's debate will lead to specific commitments that will in fact be followed up.

Finally, on behalf of my country, allow me to condemn the deadly attacks that recently took place in Iraq. I would also like to convey our condolences to the bereaved families, including innocent women and girls and those involved in the work of reconstruction.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I would like to start by commending you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, thereby illustrating your special appreciation and sensitivity to a subject that is key to the work of the Security Council. I would also like to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing. I would especially like to welcome to the Council Ms. Amy Smythe, whom we met and saw at work in Bunia. Her work is also beneficial to the Council. Finally, I would like to say that we are very honoured by the presence of Ms. Angela King, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. Of course, I also welcome the presence among us of a good number of women leaders from various countries, who have enriched our deliberations this morning.

It is my delegation's belief that the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) marked an important landmark in addressing the issue of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, demonstrating a renewed awareness of this issue by the international community. The protection of women in situations of armed conflict, the promotion of their role in conflict resolution and prevention and the adoption of a gender perspective for peacekeeping operations are all issues at the centre of international concerns that hold enormous potential for renewed commitment by the international community. If fully implemented, the resolution will make an effective contribution to strengthening international peace and security.

The continuing violence against women is particularly heightened in conflict situations. Women and young girls are still the prime targets of violence in armed conflict. They are the most exposed to the scourge of HIV due to the sexual violence against them. As new conflicts break out, the number of poor, defenceless women tends to increase.

We commend the Secretary-General for the leadership he has shown in ensuring that gender representation in the Secretariat and in the overall work of the Organization is a reality. We recognize that the United Nations bodies have enhanced the role women can play in ensuring lasting peace in crisis situations. We are also aware of the efforts made, by the United Nations system, Governments and civil societies, to support the role of women in peace-building. Nevertheless, women are still underrepresented in political and decision-making processes. Therefore, this morning's debate is a very special contribution in changing that reality.

On the occasion of this debate on women in conflict situations, it is my duty to pay special tribute to the courage of women who have given us examples of real heroism in situations of very difficult tension and war. One example comes to mind, to which two of my colleagues have already referred — that of Petronille Vaweka, who in Bunia faced a very drastic situation, protected by some Uruguayan peacekeepers — some of whom were women — and yet who exhibited a courage that provides a very good example for all of us. It also illustrates the importance of direct, first-hand experience by Council members, as we had when we visited Bunia.

I would like to pay a special tribute to Angolan women for the essential role they played during the long and extremely difficult years when the Angolan people were forced to struggle in defence of legality

and their inalienable right to decide their future. Aside from the role thousands of women played at the battlefront, carrying out their civil duty side by side with their male counterparts, Angolan women were instrumental in maintaining social cohesion in the overcrowded cities and villages, in the camps for internally displaced persons and refugee camps with displaced populations, as widows and wives of soldiers absent at the battlefront and as victims of the dire economic situation and massive unemployment. They became the sole support of millions of families. Thanks to their initiative and resolve, those women ensured the survival of millions of children, ensured that their families could maintain a life with the minimum standards and ensured that millions of families could survive the oblivion of war and despair. They played a key role in maintaining the cohesion of society. By doing so, they made an immense contribution to their emancipation.

Angolan women continue to face great difficulties because they are still disproportionately affected by poverty. The programmes for repatriation, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction address the question of poverty reduction and have adopted a gender perspective, as referred to in resolution 1325 (2000), taking into account the special needs of women and girls. We are aware that much still needs to be done to fully integrate women into the mainstream of post-conflict reconstruction. And we are aware that the assistance of the international community is vital if we are to overcome the immense problems still faced by women in particular. My Government has initiated several activities with a view to advancing and empowering women in political, social and economic life. Some progress has been achieved in gender equality, but much more remains to be done.

There is awareness that the effective promotion and maintenance of international peace and security requires a full understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls. We therefore welcome the establishment of the reporting system on sexual violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking of women and girls among the military and civilian populations, followed by enforcement and monitoring mechanisms for peacekeeping personnel and the establishment of disciplinary and oversight mechanisms in all peacekeeping missions. We understand that reversing the situation of women in a gender perspective requires political will and determination to fulfil our commitments concerning the protection and promotion of women's rights. Ensuring sustainable social development and improving the situation of women are objectives requiring joint efforts. In that regard, we fully support and encourage the Secretary-General to ensure the increasing participation of women in peacekeeping processes.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I join those who have already thanked Mr. Guéhenno and Ms. Smythe for their earlier briefings and in welcoming the presence among us of Ms. Angela King. Let me thank you, Mr. President, for giving priority to this discussion, further proof of the overdue sign of the Council's intention to remain "actively seized" with the subject — in the jargon of this matter — and, in doing so, to give much needed impetus to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

In what I am now going to say I associate myself fully with the remarks later to be presented by the Italian Ambassador on behalf of the European Union.

All Security Council resolutions, by definition, concern themselves with issues of the utmost importance to global peace and security. But resolution 1325 (2000) has very special qualities. It was a landmark. For the first time, we broadened our gaze from the traditional political and military aspects of peace and security and rightly turned our attention to the rights of those most widely and frequently affected by conflict. Crucially, in doing so, we recognized that women were not just disproportionately affected by conflict but also in many ways held the key to peace. We resolved that gender considerations must be fully and thoroughly integrated as a mainstream component of our conflict-related work in all areas, from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction. Today's discussion allows us to pause and to reflect on the progress made, on the lack of progress made and on the challenges that lie ahead.

Resolution 1325 (2000) was not just an important statement of our commitment to work for women. It has also become a beacon of hope and a rallying call. Few Security Council resolutions have resonated so widely and so deeply in the heart of civil society. As a Council, we cannot turn away from our commitments or dash the hopes that we have raised. In the three years that have passed since we adopted resolution

1325 (2000), we have returned to this discussion on a number of occasions. We have also been helped by the very useful report (S/2002/1154) and recommendations given to the Council by the Secretary-General last year. But the question is, how far have we actually got in implementation? Some progress is undoubtedly being made, but much evidently remains to be done.

I would now like to say a few words about the contribution that we in the United Kingdom have been trying to make. We have identified a number of avenues for action, both directly on our own part and through support to key partners.

For our part, we have introduced compulsory training on gender, child protection and human rights issues for all United Kingdom personnel embarking on peacekeeping missions. We have set about actively searching for and deploying female officers and experts to peacekeeping missions and other conflict prevention and conflict resolution missions. Most recently, for example, we have deployed female police officers to Sierra Leone and sent a senior gender expert to Baghdad to work there with the Coalition Provisional Authority. We are developing a database of suitably qualified United Kingdom-based women with experience in conflict prevention and conflict resolution work and who are willing to join missions overseas. Once that is complete, we will share that with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

My predecessor in this seat, Jeremy Greenstock, is today working hard to get the women of Iraq more fully and actively engaged in the reconstruction effort there. United Kingdom teams working in Iraq are being briefed on the importance we attach to this, and in a recent round of briefing meetings in London, Jeremy discussed the situation of women in Iraq with the United Kingdom Minister for Women, as well as meeting a visiting delegation of Iraqi women and representatives of United Kingdom non-governmental organizations active specifically in this field.

In 2001, the United Kingdom Government created two conflict-prevention pools, totalling together more than $200 million, to bring together the resources and the expertise that all departments in London bring to conflict prevention. That meant that the work of the Ministry of Defence, the Department for International Development, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and, centrally, the Cabinet Office all came together to try and produce one concerted, coherent, focused and strengthened effort to tackle conflict prevention. Those pools have enabled us to give direct support to United Nations activities, including helping DPKO to prepare a field manual for gender mainstreaming in field operations and enabling the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to gather information on women's peace-building and gender justice initiatives. We are also working with the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, a non-governmental organization that supports grass-roots activities in countries where there are multinational peacekeeping operations.

But as well as funding specific gender initiatives, we insist that all activities supported through these pools must integrate a gender perspective. We have seen that well-targeted funding, even at a modest level, can make a big difference, for example, encouraging women to play an active role in Afghan politics by providing childcare facilities in the main parliament in Kabul. Those things in themselves may sound very small, almost trivial, but for the women actually involved, they represent the difference between being able and not being able to participate. The whole question of mainstreaming and getting this into the bloodstream of our overall effort remains basic. And that is why we are currently evaluating the work supported through the pools, including looking at gender aspects and what we have tried to achieve so far.

Now, what impact are these and other efforts having? Are we still only scratching the surface? I think it is evident that we need to work much harder at measuring the impact of our work and, indeed, in doing more of the work. But there are some encouraging signs.

The International Criminal Court has shown its willingness to include within its remit certain crimes against women. Women now make up over a third of the new national assembly in Timor-Leste, with two female cabinet members and a 30 per cent female police force, and a survey published earlier this month stated that the country with the highest percentage of women parliamentarians is now Rwanda. But we know that women and children remain the vast majority of those killed, wounded, abused or displaced in conflict.

So what should the international community do next, and what is our role as Council members? Conflict prevention is a huge field, but the role of

gender is immensely important within it. We need to keep saying that until it becomes second nature. We must also remain committed to raising awareness of the positive role that women can play in peace-building and reconciliation, not just seeing women portrayed solely as victims. We have heard today encouraging accounts of the positive impact that women are having and can have.

The Council has a key role to play, both in giving real meaning to the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) and holding both the United Nations system and ourselves to account. The Security Council should, where appropriate, include gender in resolutions, mission mandates and progress reports. The recent resolutions on Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire are good examples of that, and we must maintain this momentum. As the Ambassador of Chile pointed out earlier on, in the past year, the United Kingdom joined a number of Member States in suggesting that the Council might establish a mechanism through which it would monitor its own progress on these issues. This might be the right time for our experts, supported by the Secretariat, to examine in more detail whether such a mechanism would be useful.

An approach that is more coordinated between all the actors, the United Nations, the Member States, non-governmental organizations and other parties, is also very necessary. Undoubtedly more resources are required, as well. Improving the situation for women in conflict will not come about just with fine words in New York. The Presidential statement adopted on the second anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) asks for a comprehensive report in 2004. The United Nations Secretariat and Member States can both usefully contribute to best practice, and that should also include the possibility of widening this agenda and strengthening the coherence of our work with women with other pressing concerns related to the rights and protection of civilians — women and men, girls and boys — in conflict and post-conflict situations. These are complex but very vital issues and there are no easy answers.

The Council must continue to focus on implementation. It must hold to account all those responsible for implementing resolution 1325 (2000), us included. We must continue to support the wider United Nations in its efforts — remember that these efforts are carried out by all parts of the United Nations family — and continue to welcome and demand briefings and progress reports such as those we have received today. But above all, we should pledge ourselves to continue to place gender in the mainstream of our work, actively seeking all opportunities to do so and remaining in the truer sense actively seized of this matter.

The President: I want to say a word about the structure for the remainder of our discussion. Ambassador Negroponte had to depart to attend a scheduled meeting with the Secretary-General, so he will deliver the United States national statement at the end of our discussion.

We are honoured to have two ministers with us this morning. I would like to give them the floor, then ask Mr. Guéhenno and Ms. Smythe if they wish to make any comments, at which time we will adjourn the meeting and resume with the speaker's list at three o'clock.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Minister for Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Her Excellency Ms. Agnes van Ardenne. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Van Ardenne (Netherlands): First of all, I should like to associate myself with the statement to be made shortly by Italy on behalf of the European Union.

Resolution 1325 (2000) is the framework for Dutch policy on women, peace and security. As I see it, the great advantage of resolution 1325 (2000) is that it presents women not simply as victims, but also as active agents in conflict resolution. We know that peace is more likely to last if all parties — men and women — work together to achieve it. Sadly, three years after the adoption of the resolution, women are still scarcely involved in efforts to resolve conflicts.

It is good that we celebrate the anniversary of the resolution every year. But it is also up to us to make sure that there is something to celebrate. Gender must be part of the Security Council's day-to-day business. It must inform the analyses the Council makes and the decisions it takes. The recent resolution on Liberia, resolution 1509 (2003), which refers to and also builds on resolution 1325 (2000), is a good example of how things can be — but unfortunately seldom are — done. It is good that non-governmental organizations are keeping up the pressure. It is often thanks to them that

the voices of women reach the Council. In that regard, I should like to express my appreciation for the work done within the framework of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), as described by Ms. Amy Smythe, Senior Gender Adviser of MONUC.

We, the Member States, need to do a number of things. We must always ask for feedback from the Secretary-General's Special Representatives and also for feedback in reports to the Security Council. We must put women candidates forward for key posts such as Special Representative. We must see to it that we strengthen the position of women and give more thought to them in peace and security operations. The same applies to disarmament campaigns and mine clearance, from which women are the first to benefit. Finally, we must learn from one another's experiences in the field through stronger and better cooperation and communication.

Last year, my Government commissioned a study of women's roles in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction. I can recommend that analysis, which sheds light on the complex role women play in conflict and post-conflict situations. We used it to evaluate and strengthen Dutch activities. One result is that we are now investing in a better balance of men and women in the Dutch armed forces. And we train them better to protect women and girls in warfare and to involve women in peacemaking. We are trying to persuade aid agencies to do the same, so that women and girls in refugee camps and elsewhere will be better protected. We are now providing more active support to women's groups taking part in peace talks — as in the Sudan last year — because we have seen that that can make peace more durable. In Afghanistan and Iraq, too, we are calling attention to the role of women in the difficult process of reconstruction.

In its new stability fund, the Netherlands has pooled official development assistance and non-official-development-assistance funds. The aim is to respond more flexibly to security and stability issues, laying a foundation for reconstruction and development. We must shake off our endless institutional concerns. Instead, we must focus on the needs and potential of both men and women trying to rebuild their lives and their countries. Their suffering in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East calls for new solutions. We owe that to them.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is His Excellency Mr. Keliopate Tavola, Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Fiji. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Tavola (Fiji): I thank you, Mr. President, for the privilege to be here and for the warmth of the welcome. I am honoured to address the Security Council on behalf of the members of the Pacific Islands Forum on the subject of women and peace and security. In doing so, I speak on behalf of the Forum countries that are Members of the United Nations — Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

I am certainly very grateful for the briefings given earlier this morning by Mr. Guéhenno and Ms. Smythe.

The Pacific Islands Forum is pleased that the issue of women and peace and security is once again on the Security Council's agenda, and we are pleased to again intervene as a group on that important item, thus underlining its significance to our members. The debate in the Security Council three years ago, leading to resolution 1325 (2000), was a milestone. The resolution signalled that, if we are committed to conflict prevention and resolution, we must be serious about the gender perspectives of conflict — both the impact of conflict on women and the contributions of women to the prevention, resolution and peace-building processes.

Our own experience in the Pacific has certainly highlighted for us the importance of implementing the principles and the framework encapsulated in resolution 1325 (2000). The recent work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on women, peace and security in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu highlighted the scope of the impact of conflict on women and the critical role played by women in promoting peace in our region. On that latter point, our experience has been that the contributions and leadership of women in both traditional and contemporary settings are critical to ensuring meaningful and sustainable peace. In Papua New Guinea, women played a pivotal role in the very

early and fragile stages of the Bougainville peace process, and they continue to play an active role in its ongoing consolidation. Similarly, in the Solomon Islands, women played a significant role through the ecumenical church movement in brokering peace in their country, and they remain centrally engaged.

I now turn to the work of the Organization. Resolution 1325 (2000) encapsulated the concept that gender perspectives must be mainstreamed into the work of the United Nations — that is, that they must be at the core of the Organization's work. Today's debate is an important opportunity to examine how far we have come in honouring that commitment.

There has certainly been some good news. One particular highlight in the past year was the agreement to establish a gender adviser post in the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. That is an excellent outcome, which we very much hope will assist in the explicit integration of gender perspectives into all aspects of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We should like to take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of an interim Gender Adviser in the Department, and we hope that the permanent position of Senior Gender Adviser will be filled shortly. We will look forward to early feedback as the position develops.

We are pleased also that UNIFEM's gender conflict situation analysis project is now under way. We are particularly pleased that UNIFEM is incorporating a Pacific perspective into that work by undertaking one of its four pilot studies in the Solomon Islands.

Elsewhere, the launch of the gender action plan of the Department for Disarmament Affairs is to be congratulated, and we would like to encourage other Departments to follow that successful example. We also welcome UNIFEM's work to build a comprehensive web-site portal, which will pull together the diverse material available on women, peace and security for use in work around the globe.

While the initiatives to which I referred are a good start, we are still some distance from where we need to be. In terms of future work, we would like to emphasize four areas.

First, while a lot of positive work has been done on improving the attention paid to these issues in the Security Council, we would like the Council to pay special attention to ensuring that its mandates focus expressly on gender perspectives and that necessary resources are made available to ensure that those mandates are fulfilled. Only 15 per cent — more precisely, 14.7 per cent, as we heard this morning — of resolutions submitted to the Security Council in the past year made any reference to gender. We hope that in future all Security Council resolutions will do so. We hope in particular that, in considering its mandates, the Council will pay special attention to the importance of ensuring that women are involved in all aspects of decision-making processes with respect to conflict, including formal negotiations. As I stated earlier, our own experience is that the contribution of women is fundamental to the resolution of conflict. Unfortunately, however, all too often those with the most information and the most extensive networks are not allowed a seat at the negotiating table.

Secondly, we would encourage the Security Council to include gender advisers or specialists in its missions as a matter of course. We also hope that the reports from the missions, which until now have been silent on gender issues, will in future include specific feedback on the gender issues covered in the missions.

Thirdly, we would stress that the pressure to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations must be maintained. We remain firmly of the view that gender sensitivity, and the inclusion of women, are critical elements of successful peacekeeping operations. We hope in particular that more work can be done on gender-perspective training for United Nations peacekeepers, and we would like to highlight the importance of the compulsory gender-training module for all personnel about to deploy.

For our region's part, I am happy to report that a number of our members stress the importance of deploying women to peacekeeping operations. With respect to my own country, Fiji, there is a strong emphasis on the deployment of women in overseas peace and security operations. Women from Fiji have served in Cambodia and Croatia, and are currently serving in Kosovo and Solomon Islands.

Fourthly and finally, with respect to leadership and representation, we would repeat our call for the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives, especially in matters relating to peacekeeping, peace-building and preventive

diplomacy. As ever, the United Nations needs to realize its own goals and lead by example.

The President: I now give the floor to Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for any comments he might wish to make.

Mr. Guéhenno: I would like first to thank all the members of the Council and other speakers, who have expressed strong support for our efforts to put gender at the centre of peacekeeping efforts in conflict areas.

I want to address two specific points that were raised, the first with respect to Afghanistan. I am grateful that Germany raised the issue of the importance of filling, as quickly as possible, the D-1 post in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. We already have a P-4 in the Gender Unit there. I think it is very important that we appoint the right person to that D-1 post, and we are actually in the process of re-advertising the post to make sure that we get the right person for what is a challenging but critical aspect of our mission in Afghanistan.

Several delegations stressed the importance of reporting, and I could not agree more; this is the other issue that I want to address. I think the more we can report to the Council about the issues that have been discussed this morning, the more we will prevent any abuse — reporting has a deterrent value — and the more we will be able to mobilize resources where they are needed, whether to help women in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration camps or to assist in police training or in the range of issues that have been discussed.

Good reporting requires a method and a systematic approach. There, I believe that the gender resource package that is now in the final stages of development will help, because it will mean that all mission personnel — whether military observers or human rights officers — will be better guided. All personnel in the mission will have better guidance and therefore a more systematic approach in their reporting, so that the Council will benefit from more homogeneous and systematic information, which in turn will make for better engagement by the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Smythe for any comments she may wish to make.

Ms. Smythe: I would like to underscore the fact that women in conflict are not merely victims, but active agents. I thank members for recognizing that fact. I would also like, on behalf of Ms. Vaweka, one of our closest partners and a role model for the women of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to thank members for recognizing the good work that she is doing.

I would like specifically to respond to the question from France concerning the relationship between the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the Congolese Administration, especially the Government Ministry for what is known as *la condition féminine*, which could, perhaps, be translated as the Ministry for Women and Family, as well as the Ministry for Women and Human Rights. Indeed, the gender unit has established contact with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we have had informal discussions and are trying to sensitize the Government on the whole issue of gender integration in every aspect of its work.

We have been holding discussions with the new Minister for *la condition féminine*, planning a specific activity in relation to the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, from 25 November to 10 December. We plan to use that as a strategy, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which has always accompanied women in decision-making since the time of the inter-Congolese dialogue. We plan to use that as a strategy to get the women and men of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to recognize the position of the new Minister. It is critical because she comes from an interesting area.

The Ministry responsible for the condition of women is trying to work internally among colleagues to sensitize the leadership on gender issues and to establish networks with agencies and interested parties to take the gender debate outside. We in the Gender Unit plan to work not only with that specific Ministry, but with all other ministries and Government agencies. We plan to carry out training programmes with the parliamentarians and the Senate and to work with the judiciary very closely.

We have been approached by other ministries. For example, we have been approached by the Ministry of Education and asked whether we could do some work with the universities. We are somewhat limited in terms of capacity, but we hope that in the near future, now that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has a physical presence in the Democratic Republic of the

Congo, that, in the context of collaboration, we can do a little bit more than we have been doing.

We are very mindful of the fact that ours is a very small outfit, but we are working in close collaboration with the agencies that are there. Specifically, we have collaborated with the Ministry of Health, which took the lead recently on the issue of violence against women, again in collaboration with UNIFEM. In that context, we participated in the elaboration of an inter-agency project to deal with the issue of violence against women. Here I would stress that we are merely collaborating; it is a joint effort on the part of the agencies.

Our task as the gender ministry is to ensure that women's voices are factored into the process. We are working on the ground to find out about local initiatives and what women themselves have been doing, and then serving as the link with our colleagues in the various agencies to make sure that this is taken into consideration.

In summary, the gender ministry is working very closely with various ministries, not only directly but also in collaboration with agencies and with other sections and divisions of MONUC.

The President: I thank Ms. Smythe for her comments and for joining us today.

The meeting was suspended at 1.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4853

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4853rd meeting

Thursday, 30 October 2003, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Negroponte	(United States of America)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Tidjani
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Pujalte
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Atieh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2003/996)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-58669 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2003/996)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Italy, Japan, Serbia and Montenegro and Ukraine, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Šahović (Serbia and Montenegro) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Harri Holkeri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Holkeri to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2003/996, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Harri Holkeri. As this is the first appearance of Mr. Holkeri in his capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of Mission of UNMIK, although he is definitely no stranger to these halls, on behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to him.

I call on Mr. Holkeri.

Mr. Holkeri: I arrived in Kosovo to begin my mission as Special Representative of the Secretary-General 11 weeks ago. I had hardly been on the ground for half an hour when someone fired several rounds of bullets at a group of children swimming in a stream. Two Kosovo Serb boys were killed and two were seriously injured that day in Gorazdevac. That incident may well have been intended to be a message for me. There have been previous cases in which violent acts were timed to coincide with high-level international visits or heightened international progress on Kosovo. However, it only strengthened my resolve to start my mission.

Last week I visited a military hospital in Belgrade, where one of the seriously wounded, Bogdan Bukumiric, is recovering. He asked me how the investigations were progressing. I told him that it was our responsibility to do our utmost to bring to justice those responsible for the crime. But, echoing the message that I have delivered to so many in Kosovo, I told him that we needed the help and cooperation of ordinary people to ensure that justice was done. Unfortunately, as in many other societies, investigators run up against a wall of silence due to fear and intimidation. My young friend Bogdan and his generation need a future in which there is no threat of violence. I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of the people of Kosovo, regardless of their ethnic background, are against the use of violence.

In addition to the shooting at Gorazdevac, several other senseless, violent incidents shook Kosovo in the weeks that followed. I have made it clear to Kosovo's leaders that issuing statements of sorrow is not enough. I have urged them to get out of their offices and explain to their constituents in towns, villages, workplaces, schools and families that violence must stop. It harms

Kosovo. Far too many people silently tolerate ethnically based violence. This must be opposed.

The attacks can resume at any time. Extremists from one side or the other may again try to influence the international perception of Kosovo to discredit the peace-building activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR), or they can resort to violent acts to dissuade internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees from returning.

The overall security situation has vastly improved across most of Kosovo, but the dramatic advances enjoyed by the majority community have not been felt by all. The rule of law is being openly flouted in many places around Kosovo. Combating these phenomena will require upholding intensive cooperation between UNMIK's Police and Justice Pillar, with the full engagement of the Kosovo Police Service (KPS), and the NATO-led peacekeeping force. KFOR continues to do excellent work in ensuring a safe and secure environment throughout Kosovo. We count on their continued, robust support.

The Kosovo Police Service, now numbering nearly 6,000 servicemen and women, is increasingly qualified to handle more advanced police activities. As a result, UNMIK police have begun gradually reducing their presence. Similarly, the judiciary is also increasingly being staffed and run by local residents. The exclusive use of international judges on trial panels is rapidly diminishing as members of the local judiciary demonstrate the ability to take on difficult cases.

Still, much remains to be done to improve the security situation in Kosovo. Security and the rule of law remain my highest priority, as both are indispensable for progress on so many other key issues, including returns and economic development.

The violent incidents of this past summer have had a serious effect on the perception of security in minority communities. Clearly, if internally displaced persons fear for their safety they will not return to their homes. Inter-ethnic violence should not be allowed to hamper the positive trend in returns, which was supported by the open letter signed at the beginning of July by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and addressed to the IDPs, urging them to return. This commendable commitment was further backed up by the allocation by the Provisional Institutions of €7 million from the Kosovo consolidated budget to funding returns projects. This is a most welcome and constructive development.

Overall, freedom of movement has continued to improve in most parts of Kosovo as UNMIK has provided or facilitated transport services for minority communities. The challenge remains to ensure that all municipalities, and particularly those that are to receive returning IDPs, show a clear commitment to a tolerant, multi-ethnic society.

Let me take this opportunity to remind you that returns require timely planning and sufficient financing to be successful. Donor funds for 2004 should be released early enough to allow the projects to be duly prepared.

Another fundamental objective is the direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. Much of my time has been occupied in preparing the launch of this important process. My aim has been to translate the political commitment of the Thessaloniki European Union-Western Balkans Summit, where both Belgrade and Pristina accepted the dialogue process, into a concrete and effective framework for communication between the parties.

This has proved to be a challenging and strenuous effort. Prime Minister Rexhepi has consistently conditioned the Government's participation in the dialogue on the consensual approval of the main coalition parties or a consensus of the Assembly. In my view — and this view is largely shared by the international community — the Government must promptly decide to engage in the technical talks. The Prime Minister and his respective ministries should determine without further delay how best the Government can contribute to the process. Furthermore, some Kosovo Albanian political leaders have made their participation in any talks conditional on changes in the governmental responsibilities and structures as well as the establishment of new ministries, including in reserved areas.

There cannot be any linkage between the dialogue process and enhancement of the responsibilities and structures of the Provisional Institutions. Such bargaining is not acceptable. Dialogue is one of the standards approved by the Security Council. As to the transfer of further competencies beyond chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework, the Security Council, I am sure, will provide the necessary guidance.

Failure of the Government and the coalition parties to accept responsibility for contributing to the achievement of this particular benchmark resulted in the launching of the talks in Vienna on 14 October 2003 with the participation of only two out of three institutional leaders — Mr. Rugova, President of Kosovo, and Mr. Daci, President of the Kosovo Assembly. I commend their political courage and responsible action. It is regrettable that the Government's absence prevented a multi-ethnic representation from Pristina at the Vienna meeting. I appreciate that despite this fact Prime Minister Zivkovic and Deputy Prime Minister Covic decided to come.

The Belgrade and Pristina delegations sat on either side of me in the historic Congress Hall of the Austrian Federal Chancellery. An impressive array of representatives of the international community at the highest level was present. It is known that the Belgrade and Pristina delegation members did not interact, but at that first encounter they did listen carefully to what the other side had to say and, in certain areas, their comments provided encouraging signals that progress could be made. The international community's representatives offered words of encouragement to the participants to proceed with the dialogue, emphasizing this as one of the eight benchmarks that should be fulfilled before talks on final status or future status can begin.

Now our task is to maintain the momentum and to move forward. The four working groups with multi-ethnic representation on the Kosovo side must be promptly established and begin technical talks in Belgrade and Pristina at the expert level. That, too, is likely to be an uphill struggle. I appeal to this Council and to the international community as a whole to provide continued support for the dialogue process. Speaking with one voice as they did in Vienna is of utmost importance.

While these efforts are ongoing, the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and UNMIK are now intensely focused on a joint plan for implementing the eight benchmarks. We are closely coordinating with the Office of the Prime Minister to develop achievable goals within agreed time frames to enable the Provisional Institutions to meet standards. The joint plan should offer clarity both to the people of Kosovo and to the international community on implementation of the standards and the evaluation of progress.

I have focused primarily on security, returns, dialogue and standards, but there are serious challenges in other areas as well. Kosovo's economy is showing progress. Tax revenues and customs duties exceed expectations. Necessary management changes for Kosovo's most intractable problem in the economic sphere — the unstable and inadequate electricity supply — have been agreed with the Government. Unemployment remains at about 57 per cent overall and is even higher for women and young people. Privatization is essential and certainly the only hope in addressing this challenge.

However, the Kosovo Trust Agency (KTA) is expressing concerns related to immunity of its personnel and the legal platform provided by the current KTA legislation. This is adversely affecting the privatization process. Further discussions on these issues are necessary in order to facilitate the effective implementation of the privatization process, which is vital to the economic development of Kosovo.

UNMIK is nearing completion of the agreed transfer of competencies in non-reserved areas to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government based on the Constitutional Framework. We must ensure not only that non-reserved competencies are effectively transferred, but also that the Provisional Institutions are in a position to absorb the new responsibilities and to carry them out with the necessary technical competence and political fairness.

Kosovo's leaders are increasingly demanding that UNMIK also transfer competencies in reserved areas. I have told them that the Provisional Institutions' advance into reserved areas under the Constitutional Framework is beyond my mandate and will require action by the Security Council. At the same time, I have expressed my commitment to working with the Government to enhance its effectiveness in a true spirit of partnership. I have indicated my readiness to give favourable consideration to the establishment of new structures that may be needed for this purpose, always in conformity with resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework.

Meanwhile, Kosovo's democratic institutions, at both the central and municipal levels, continue to develop and are gradually improving their administrative skills and effectiveness. UNMIK will soon be receiving the Council of Europe mission's recommendations on decentralization in Kosovo, due

in mid-November. These should form a good basis for bringing democratic local Government closer to the people and increasing its efficiency. The process of decentralization is likely to be complex and lengthy and will depend on the ability of local representatives to take on additional responsibilities. However, even now much more needs to be done to provide functioning services to all citizens and to ensure respect for minority rights at all levels of governance.

It is of very serious concern that the Belgrade authorities continue to strengthen parallel structures in Kosovo, as evidenced by the recent unilateral appointment by the Coordination Centre for Kosovo of so-called regional and municipal coordinators. Belgrade must work with Kosovo structures and replace this unacceptable policy with a commitment to truly multi-ethnic organs of Government in Kosovo. Failure to change course will impede the development of genuine multi-ethnicity in Kosovo.

Parallel courts continue to function in the northern municipalities and even outside of Kosovo. This is really unacceptable. These parallel courts pretend to exercise jurisdiction in Kosovo. International arrest warrants that have no validity have been issued through these unauthorized structures against Kosovo residents. This has already caused serious difficulties and cannot be tolerated. Under resolution 1244 (1999), it is UNMIK that has jurisdiction and authority over Kosovo.

The short-to-medium term outlook for Kosovo is uncertain, but the strong desire of Kosovo's people to live in a peaceful, stable, lawful society is crystal clear. Infighting and jockeying for position among politicians in advance of elections in Kosovo and Serbia will continue to hamper our attempts to fulfil the tasks vital for implementation of UNMIK's mandate. The public is growing increasingly frustrated with the Government's apparent inability to tackle matters that affect its well-being. Continued high levels of unemployment are of special concern. The Provisional Institutions of Self-Government for their part are constantly blaming all deficiencies on what they perceive to be an absence of authority to deal with these matters.

These tensions — caused by Belgrade's continued support of parallel structures; the possibility of a renewal of ethnically-motivated violent attacks; and the resulting fears that continue to keep many internally displaced persons from returning to Kosovo — are all challenges that require us to maintain a firm commitment to the principles and objectives embodied in resolution 1244 (1999).

UNMIK, KFOR and the international community still have much to do together in Kosovo to ensure the fulfilment of standards. This will enable the Security Council to determine Kosovo's future status. We look forward to the continued support of the Security Council and the international community in meeting the ongoing challenges.

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation joins you, Mr. President, in welcoming Mr. Harri Holkeri, who is with us today. We congratulate him on his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. We also wish to thank him for his comprehensive and useful briefing on developments in the situation in Kosovo.

My delegation is pleased to hear Mr. Holkeri confirm the essential priorities of the Mission, namely, consolidating the rule of law, improving the security situation, strengthening the rights of minorities and returnees and promoting economic development. We support the Special Representative's focus on the need to improve the security situation in order to prevent acts of violence that could lead to a setback for the peace process and undermine the progress made thus far. We encourage Mr. Holkeri to participate in the preparations for the direct dialogue on practical matters between Pristina and Belgrade. That dialogue is one of the benchmarks required to fulfil the necessary standards before Kosovo's status can be addressed.

We are satisfied with the process of transferring non-reserved competencies to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in accordance with chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework, so long as those responsibilities are transferred in a gradual and controlled manner and in cooperation with the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. In that regard, we point to the need to adopt measures at the local level to improve the effectiveness of municipal administrations and their capacity to respond to the needs of citizens, as well as to overcome political obstacles that may have an impact on the work of municipal councils. In that connection, we underscore the need to ensure that recruitment for the civil service

is characterized by transparency and represents the ethnic balance of Kosovo's population. In addition, the participation of women must be ensured in order to guarantee the effectiveness of the public sector.

My delegation reaffirms the need to strengthen the rule of law and to protect the rights of ethnic minorities in Kosovo. There is also a need to combat organized crime, monitor the borders and prevent trafficking in weapons and drugs. We also emphasize the need to ensure the return of refugees and internally displaced persons under secure and safe conditions, as well as to guarantee the freedom of movement. That is an important concern to many minorities. In fact, the feeling of heightened insecurity has a negative impact on the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes and properties; this produces an economic and social imbalance for the population of the entire region.

My delegation would also like to reaffirm and support the comments made by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2003/996), in which he says that economic and social development are important for strengthening Kosovo's stability and for attracting regional and international investors who could invest in many economic projects that could produce the economic development desired by the people of Kosovo.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its support for Mr. Holkeri. We are prepared to cooperate with him and with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo to ensure the security and stability of the province and of the Balkan region as a whole.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): The Special Representative has given the Security Council a briefing in which he referred to the tragic events he has witnessed since his appointment. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that we are unfortunately all too familiar with the language of bombs and murder utilized by terrorists to communicate. I would also like to say that the memory of those who have died under such circumstances compels us to be particularly resolved in combating terrorism. I wish to reaffirm that resolve here. I would like to thank Mr. Holkeri for his briefing, which highlighted the priorities and prospects for Kosovo.

Mr. Holkeri noted in his briefing the importance of the role played by the European Union. We support that role and fully agree with the statement that will be made shortly by Italy on behalf of the presidency of the European Union. In addition to the comments to be made by the representative of Italy, I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, the international community remains determined to move forward on this issue in accordance with the "standards before status" formula. In other words, the international community believes that the issue of the Kosovo's future status cannot begin to be calmly and effectively addressed until the progress made to attain each of the eight standards is deemed to be satisfactory. The goals are familiar. The attainment of the eight standards endorsed by the international community will make it possible to proceed to building a modern, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo. In addition, that phase will be essential in the process of bringing Kosovo closer to the European Union. The Secretary-General's very comprehensive report (S/2003/996) makes it possible to assess the scope of the efforts that must still be made in each of the eight areas. I hope that the joint implementation plan that is being finalized will enable the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to make active progress in that regard.

My delegation would like to refer to three of those standards today, without establishing any sort of hierarchy among them. First, with regard to relations with Belgrade, the direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade was launched on 14 October 2003 thanks to Mr. Holkeri's efforts. We welcome that development, which is in keeping with a priority of the international community as well as with the commitment entered into by the parties at the Thessaloniki Summit. Technical working groups must now work on four subjects of common interest. We call upon Belgrade, and in particular upon the provisional authorities in Pristina, to engage constructively in that dialogue, including by establishing representative delegations. It is not just a matter of implementing one of the eight standards; rather, it is a matter of concrete improvement in the daily lives of the region's inhabitants.

Secondly, I wish to refer to the return to Kosovo of displaced persons. We condemn the violence that took place this summer. That violence could have a deterrent effect for some time on those wishing to return. We were encouraged by the statements made by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government

condemning that violence. We welcome their public commitment in favour of returns. We hope that the Provisional Institutions will now take the concrete measures necessary to prevent any repetition of such violence and to ensure that persons returning to Kosovo can do so in conditions of normal security and dignity.

Finally, allow me to speak about the goal of building functional and democratic institutions, which also applies to the local level of administration. The attainment of the goals of the international community takes place largely at the municipal level. We therefore attach great importance to the implementation of the decentralization plan. We encourage all stakeholders to implement as soon as possible the recommendations to be made on decentralization.

In conclusion, I reiterate to Mr. Harri Holkeri how much we appreciate the work he is carrying out in difficult conditions in Kosovo. We know how much investment that work will require, but we also know how important it is for the future of Kosovo and for the stability of the entire region. Mr. Holkeri can count on our full and abiding support. We call upon all stakeholders to cooperate constructively with him.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I join in welcoming Mr. Holkeri to the Security Council and thank him for his briefing. We compliment Mr. Holkeri on the work done in his first few months in office in implementing the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999), especially those relating to the promotion of substantial autonomy and self-government in Kosovo. The pace of work in the process of transferring responsibilities to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government is proceeding satisfactorily, it seems. We are also pleased with Mr. Holkeri's acceptance of the proposals, which are in line with chapter 8 of the Constitutional Framework, to consider the transfer of additional responsibilities which are reserved for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Further progress in the discussions in the Assembly of Kosovo, in spite of the difficulties therein, and progress at the local government level are positive developments. Here again, we congratulate the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) on its efforts to move ahead. The continued existence of parallel administrative structures, however, remains a matter of concern. Also of concern are the issues of security and freedom of movement. In spite of efforts by UNMIK to strengthen the rule of law, substantial problems remain.

We are pleased that there has been an increase in the return of refugees. However, further progress is needed on other issues, such as sustainable returns, minority rights and inter-ethnic integration. Here, despite the complexities involved, we support UNMIK's ongoing efforts.

While we support UNMIK's ongoing efforts to establish standards in Kosovo, we continue to have reservations about the standards-before-status approach. This is a unique approach; it has not been applied to other situations in similar circumstances. Standards-before-status, for instance, was not applied in East Timor or other disputed areas, such as Abkhazia or Western Sahara. Standards, we agree, are important, but they should not become an unnecessary obstacle to the early resolution of the future status of Kosovo. We recognize that the status issue in Kosovo is very complex and delicate, and may yet require patient, hard work to resolve. However, we feel that the status issue must be given its due priority and should be de-linked from standards. The development of standards should proceed independently. However, even if resolution of the status issue may take some time, it should not be conditional upon the achievement of standards which may be difficult to realize.

Pakistan therefore fully supports Mr. Holkeri's efforts in launching a direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade on practical matters. We hope that in due course this dialogue, once established, can become the basis for further discussions on the status issue. This may work in parallel with other mechanisms, including those aimed at allowing all the people of Kosovo to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. The issue of status and the important principles that underlie it are too important for the Council to ignore or to put off.

One final word on UNMIK: while we fully recognize that the future of Kosovo is being viewed in the European context, the role of UNMIK must continue to be an international one. In that regard, we would like to see a greater geographical balance in the recruitment of senior UNMIK staff, particularly the principal international officers. Similarly, UNMIK must also continue to seek the widest possible international support for its key activities and

initiatives, especially in the United Nations and among the troop-contributing countries.

In conclusion, I once again commend Mr. Holkeri for his achievements thus far and assure him of Pakistan's continued support for his efforts to establish peace, stability and self-governance in Kosovo, with respect for the rights of all its people.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): First, I join other delegations in thanking Special Representative Mr. Holkeri for his very comprehensive briefing. I also commend him for his work in his first few months of duty, and assure him of our continued support for his very difficult and important work.

Secondly, I would like to state that Germany fully subscribes to the statement that Italy will make shortly on behalf of the European Union.

The opening session of direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade in Vienna this month returned Kosovo to the headlines. This is because direct dialogue is rightly seen as pointing the way towards a solution to many of Kosovo's problems. We share the regret of Mr. Holkeri that the Kosovo Government was not represented there. We hope that this will change, because there is simply no alternative to direct dialogue right now. That is why Germany attaches high priority to getting effective working groups for direct dialogue under way as soon as possible.

Allow me to highlight some of the developments described in the Secretary-General's report, as also mentioned by the Special Representative.

The security situation in Kosovo is still very worrying. It has been reported that continuing violence in Kosovo has, sadly, again led to the deaths of innocent civilians and police. I repeat what has been said in the Council on many previous occasions: this violence is absolutely unacceptable. The horrible experience of the Kosovars in the Kosovo crisis and the atrocities committed against the Kosovo Albanian majority population in the past cannot in any way justify violence against the Kosovo minority population today. Any form of violent revenge and ethnic hatred is absolutely unacceptable.

This problem is directly linked to the benchmarks and the question of the future of Kosovo. Unless this violence ends and Kosovars of all ethnic communities feel secure in Kosovo, it will not be possible for displaced persons to return to their homes. The secure return of displaced persons is one of the benchmarks that must be met before progress can be made towards solving the status issue.

We call upon politicians in Kosovo to actively work against that climate of hatred, to condemn in unmistakable terms violence when it occurs and also to encourage the best possible cooperation of the various ethnic communities with the police in solving violent crimes. It is disturbing that, as pointed out in the report and by Mr. Holkeri, none of the criminals responsible for the murders recently committed have been identified.

In addition to an end to the violence, a successful returns policy will require an effective political decentralization plan. The international community must give high priority to elaborating such a plan in the next several months, a plan that provides for the needs of all communities. This will help build confidence and ease the negotiations between the parties.

On the other hand, the illegal parallel Government structures, which, as pointed out in the Secretary-General's report and by Mr. Holkeri, are supported by Belgrade, are still in place and are a significant hindrance to progress. We fully share Mr. Holkeri's remarks about parallel courts. These parallel structures must be eliminated immediately.

On the topic of benchmarks, we feel that it will be extremely helpful to have all benchmarks fully operationalized into a more detailed work plan. This will help focus work in Kosovo on what needs to be achieved, and will give the international community a clearer basis on which to judge progress. We hope that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo institutions will be able to finish work on the operationalized benchmarks as swiftly as possible. These benchmarks should be closely linked with the measures that need to be taken by the parties in the region to advance their declared ambitions to move forward in the European stabilization and association process.

I would like to make some remarks on the legal difficulties that have arisen in connection with privatizing socially owned enterprises in Kosovo, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report. The board of the privatization agency in Kosovo, the Kosovo Trust Agency, concluded that legal uncertainties prevented further progress on privatization of socially owned firms in Kosovo. It seems that the staff of the

Agency — and, indeed, of all UNMIK Pillar IV — are not presently covered by United Nations immunity. Therefore, individual staff members may be exposing themselves, as well as the agency, to unacceptable liability. This problem needs to be resolved quickly. In our understanding, UNMIK Pillar IV, including the Kosovo Trust Agency, is an integral part of the United Nations mission in Kosovo, just as the other Pillars are. We hope that the United Nations and its legal department will find a solution to this problem soon.

Rapid privatization is — and we agree with what Mr. Holkeri said on this — essential for making the best economic use of the assets that Kosovo possesses, and economic progress is essential to creating social and political stability. Therefore, it is necessary for privatization not to lag behind, as it does now, but to make rapid progress.

Let me close by returning to the topic of direct dialogue. We hope to see the working group sessions in all areas get under way next month. In addition to being an essential benchmark, direct dialogue is the single best way to build trust between the parties.

The groups of experts will address problems such as shortages of electricity and difficulties in travelling across borders that if eased will make a real difference in the lives of ordinary people. I was glad to hear from Mr. Holkeri that progress is being made in this regard. However, we understand that there is still great mistrust between the parties, which may make them hesitate. We believe they must focus on the many positive achievements they can make for their people by now talking to each other.

In conclusion, Germany stands ready to help facilitate this dialogue, but it is, of course, up to the parties themselves to make it work.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Like our colleagues, we are grateful to the Secretary-General for his report. We are delighted to welcome Harri Holkeri, and we are grateful to him for his briefing.

The assessments in the report and those presented by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General are largely consonant with our view of the processes that are taking place in Kosovo. We have repeatedly stated that view at meetings of the Security Council.

We continue to believe that, despite some positive changes in bringing about substantial autonomy and self-government in the province, pursuant to resolution 1244 (1999), a number of important tasks are still very far from being resolved. Key demands of that resolution continue to be unimplemented, particularly those parts that refer to the non-Albanian inhabitants of Kosovo and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

There is no reliable and equal security for the entire population of the province. There are no equal fundamental rights and freedoms for everybody, including the right to fair employment conditions. There is no adequate representation of minorities, particularly of the Serbian minority, in the structures of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government.

Despite an overall drop in the crime rate, serious incidents involving violence still take place, including incidents that are clearly ethnically motivated. Unfortunately, persons guilty of perpetrating a whole series of atrocious crimes against the representatives of the Serbian community in the province have still not been identified and therefore have not been duly punished. Suffice it to recall here the murder of a Serbian family in Obilić and an armed attack on Serbian school children in Gorazdevac. These crimes have no justification and are simply manifestations of terrorism. We note the steps taken by the international presence to apprehend the perpetrators and prosecute them.

However, we must also note that even the few positive changes that have taken place in the situation of the minorities and in support of the process of returning non-Albanian refugees to the province, changes noted in the report, were brought about, to a large extent, only thanks to the constant pressure exerted by the international community.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General's view that statements by the leaders of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government regarding their commitment to multi-ethnicity must be backed by action. Unfortunately, we see that, in practice, those organs are very often continuing to disregard minority interests and are in no hurry to shoulder the responsibilities that they must assume in transferring the so-called non-reserved competencies, in conformity with the Constitutional Framework and resolution 1244 (1999).

Like other members of the Security Council, we are convinced that, unless there is radical change for

the better in these areas, the dream of building a multi-ethnic, democratic society in Kosovo will continue to be deferred. That will create unhealthy illusions in the minds of the extremist forces remaining in the province, which will in turn create a breeding ground for more violence.

With regard to the preservation of certain elements of the parallel structures in Kosovo, that problem must be resolved on the basis of mutually acceptable agreements. It is very important that such agreements be conducive to meeting the daily needs of all the communities — particularly the minority communities — in Kosovo.

We commend Mr. Harri Holkeri for assisting in the organization of the meeting that took place in Vienna on 14 October, with the purpose of launching a direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina on practical problems of mutual interest. We note that, at the Vienna meeting, both sides stated their support for the international community's efforts to launch such a dialogue and reaffirmed their willingness to facilitate its advancement in the working groups.

Of course, we cannot fail to express our regret that, at the Vienna meeting, the head of the provincial Government, Mr. Rexhepi, refused to participate. Nevertheless, we hope that discussions in the working groups on practical issues, such as the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, determining the fate of missing persons and cooperating in the areas of energy, transportation and communications, will begin very soon and that such discussions will be conducted in a non-politicized, businesslike and constructive atmosphere.

International efforts should be aimed essentially at full implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) and based on the agreed principle of "standards before status"; consideration of the political aspects of the problem of Kosovo — including Kosovo's future status — is premature at this stage. The Russian Federation will continue to participate actively in joint efforts to find a just, balanced and lasting solution to the problem of Kosovo.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for the initiative you have taken in organizing this public debate on Kosovo. Indeed, over the past four months, that province has been at the centre of intense diplomatic activity. A key event was undoubtedly the appointment of Mr. Harri Holkeri as a new Special Representative of the Secretary-General. My delegation is pleased at his presence today to provide a comprehensive briefing to the Security Council on developments in the situation in Kosovo. I wish to take this opportunity to reassure him of Cameroon's support for his difficult mandate and his tireless efforts to promote the reconciliation process, to improve the rule of law and the security situation, to promote returns and minority rights, and to create and strengthen conditions for economic development beneficial to everyone. My delegation also thanks the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and very useful report (S/2003/996).

On 14 October, a direct political dialogue was established, for the very first time and at the highest level, between the Belgrade and Pristina authorities. That is a step that we hope will be decisive in establishing a climate of confidence among the parties, despite the non-participation of the Government, which we call upon to become urgently involved. Indeed, the parties must show political courage and a heightened sense of responsibility. Those elements can make the dialogue consistent and open up new prospects for reconciliation and peace. This new momentum, which carries hope, should be able to inspire and hasten negotiations in the four working groups on energy, missing persons, returns, and transport and communication, with a view to swiftly achieving decisive results on those practical aspects that can make life in Kosovo easier.

I wish to recall my country's attachment to the principle of "standards before status". That is why we firmly believe that the path taken on 14 October in Vienna is a good approach. It can guide the international community in its quest for a reasonable and lasting solution to the problem of Kosovo's final status. Such a solution, we think, can be achieved only when the benchmarks have been fully applied. The launching of a direct dialogue on practical questions of mutual interest between Belgrade and Pristina should, however, not conceal the admirable efforts undertaken within the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo.

Yes, it is undeniable that remarkable progress has been made in the unpredictable province of Kosovo, and we welcome that. But that progress, however remarkable, should not lessen our vigilance for even a moment. Indeed, it is clear from the report of the

Secretary-General and from the balance of Mr. Holkeri's preliminary briefing that violence in Kosovo with regard to minorities remains a living reality whose effects are seen in the low rate of returns of displaced persons and in the resurgence of intolerant and exclusionary behaviour, especially with regard to youth and in terms of education and health. Such attitudes, if we are not careful, could widen the current social breach. Kosovo's provisional authorities must do everything possible to curb those tendencies and to promote multi-ethnic and multi-cultural integration, particularly in this period, when there are great hopes at both the political and economic levels. Those authorities, who have just inherited the transfer of 19 competences reserved for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General — in conformity with the Constitutional Framework — and are preparing to receive 13 more before the end of 2003, should reassure the international community. In that context, I should like to refer to the security situation in this region of Kosovo, where the resurgence of violence — mainly against minorities — must be condemned and fought against, because it could eventually reduce to naught the progress achieved on returns, dashing the immense hopes aroused by Vienna.

Certainly, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) remains resolutely committed to establishing the rule of law and to providing Kosovo with judicial institutions that conform to European standards. But UNMIK itself has not been spared from attacks, which for the first time have caused the deaths of international police officers. That once again raises the problem of the security of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel, which itself is a major concern for my delegation. We also fear that the new wave of this violence is targeted. If it persists, it could dull the international community's fervour and definitely jeopardize the process of reconciliation and inter-ethnic normalization in Kosovo. That would be a clear victory for extremists of all stripes. The international community must not resign itself to that. Any measure that it undertakes must necessarily proceed from the recommendations of those with a mandate on the ground who are experiencing Kosovo's daily realities.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to Mr. Holkeri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the quality of the work that he has accomplished in such a short period of time. We reiterate our thanks and words of encouragement to all the members of UNMIK, who are risking their lives each day to work tirelessly for the advent of a reconciled Kosovo.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain would like to express appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Holkeri for his comprehensive briefing to the Security Council. Spain fully endorses the statement to be made later by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

We believe that the priorities established by the Secretary-General for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and reaffirmed with the appointment of the Special Representative remain fully in force. The restoration of the rule of law, the improvement of the security situation, respect for minorities — terrorist acts against minorities being particularly reprehensible — and economic development are all objectives that must remain on the agenda, since the success of the Mission will depend upon their fulfilment.

We believe that three fundamental elements must be taken into account if those objectives are to be achieved.

First, the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and UNMIK must work together with a view to attaining those goals. In this regard, we should reiterate to the Albanian side that it cannot be an interlocutor at the negotiating table and an opponent on the ground — giving rise to suspicions of corruption on the part of UNMIK and issuing warnings to the Special Representative about the policies that he should pursue.

Secondly, Spain fully supports the "standards before status" policy. The establishment of objective benchmarks is essential, and their fulfilment will be required if that policy is to become fully operational through the work plan. Transfers must be carried out in an orderly manner in all areas, not only in relation to issues of internal justice, but also as regards privatization and the management of financial and customs issues.

Thirdly, we believe that dialogue must be maintained between Pristina and Belgrade, and both sides need to redouble their efforts to that end. The absence of key interlocutors in the process is highly regrettable, but we must not forget that it is the basic principle of all negotiations that preconditions not be

established that are unacceptable to the other side. For that reason, we call for technical working groups to be set up without delay so that the population can see tangible results on the ground as soon as possible.

Finally, I would like to ask Mr. Holkeri about the parallel institutions and the return of refugees. We would be grateful if he would tell us why the parallel institutions remain in place and whether measures have been taken for their eradication. Secondly, I would like to ask the Special Representative to explain why it is that the rate of return of refugees is still so low and what impact the local authorities and the security situation have in this respect.

In conclusion, I would like once again to thank Mr. Holkeri for his very commendable work.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to welcome Mr. Harri Holkeri and thank him for his comprehensive briefing, which provided us with further details about the development of the situation in Kosovo. His description of the situation there is in many respects encouraging. However, the international community and the people of Kosovo in particular must redouble their efforts to implement resolution 1244 (1999).

With regard to the functioning of the democratic institutions, my delegation appreciates Mr. Holkeri's decision to continue in a decisive manner with the policy of "standards before status", as well as the gradual transfer by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) of the responsibilities listed in chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework. We also appreciate the improvement in relations between the Government and the Assembly and the participation of all political groups in the meetings of that body; the establishment of the recruitment committee; the increasing determination of the Provisional Institutions to focus on the adoption of policies and laws conducive to meeting the specific needs of the population; and, finally, the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Gender Equality and, within the Assembly, of a Gender Equality Commission.

We encourage the authorities to continue their efforts to include minorities in central and local administrations, and we hope that UNMIK's mission performance management plan will achieve conclusive results.

We deplore the continued existence of the parallel structures and urge the Serbian authorities to cooperate more effectively with a view to reaching a definitive resolution of that question.

With regard to the rule of law, my delegation remains concerned about the ongoing violence, as well as the effects of such violence. It is likewise concerned about the situation prevailing in prisons and the problems associated with freedom of movement; appropriate solutions need to be found to those problems.

The progress made by UNMIK in setting up effective, solid judicial institutions, in combating serious crime, prostitution and trafficking in human beings, and in improving the Kosovo Police Service deserves support. We encourage the police cooperation that is taking place at the provincial and regional levels and the strengthening of the Kosovo Organized Crime Bureau.

Returns and the rights of minorities are sources of major concern, since the resolution of those issues could have a beneficial impact on the process of integration and reconciliation, which in turn could be conducive to the stabilization of the area. My delegation welcomes the number of returns registered during the reporting period, as well as, inter alia, the clearly more robust intervention by representatives of the Provisional Institutions, such as can be seen from the open letter by Albanian leaders and Kosovo minorities, and the provision of $67 million for that process.

Turning to the integration and utilization of public services, my delegation appreciates the work done by UNMIK and the United Nations Development Programme, which has made it possible for work to start on about 50 houses, as well as the work of the Housing and Property Directorate, which should be supported.

While we encourage UNMIK in its support for the initiatives to encourage returns and inter-ethnic dialogue, we await with interest the outcome of the evaluation process for this season, which will make it possible to better prepare a strategy for 2004. We hope that the draft anti-discrimination law submitted to the Kosovo Assembly will be given favourable consideration. Furthermore, we have taken note of the progress being made in the economic area, in particular in the fields of privatization and taxation. We welcome

this momentum and stress our concern about unemployment, an issue which must be definitively resolved.

We welcome also the work of the European Union's Stabilization and Association Efforts Tracking Mechanism, and we hope that the holding of sectoral meetings with the relevant Kosovo institutions will yield positive results.

Moreover, my delegation — which has always recommended dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade and encouraged regional cooperation — is grateful to Mr. Holkeri for his efforts, which have made possible the launching of direct talks on questions of mutual interest. We hope that the dialogue that took place on 14 October at Vienna, which is only the start of the process, will have a positive outcome.

We commend also the work done by UNMIK to promote direct cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina, which made possible the holding of meetings between officials of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with counterparts from Belgrade.

On the question of the Kosovo Protection Corps, my delegation appreciates the steps taken by UNMIK and KFOR on its structure and functioning, in particular those measures aimed at increasing its professionalism and reliability and making it more operational. It welcomes the establishment of a high-level Civil Protection Development Group, co-chaired by Mr. Holkeri and the commander of KFOR. It stresses training as well as the importance of the multi-ethnic composition of the KPC. We await with interest the definition by UNMIK of the legal basis for KPC activities as a civil emergency agency.

With regard to support activities, we hope that the current downsizing strategy will in no way affect the process of the effective restoration of peace.

Finally, my delegation endorses the comments made by the Secretary-General in his report, and we thank his Special Representative and all the members of the Mission for the work they have done and reiterate our support for them.

Mr. Pujalte (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I wish to thank Mr. Harri Holkeri, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, for his presence here today and also for having briefed us on the current situation and the prospects for Kosovo.

Since this is the first time that Mr. Holkeri has briefed the Security Council, I wish to express to him the Mexican Government's support for the work that he has begun at the head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We are confident that his leadership will contribute to the development of Kosovo as a multi-ethnic, tolerant, democratic and prosperous society in which the rule of law prevails.

Undoubtedly, the launching on 14 October in Vienna of direct talks on practical matters between Belgrade and the Pristina authorities is an important step in the right direction, regardless of the composition of the delegations or of the immediate results achieved. It is important that the working groups begin to meet as soon as possible in order to discuss the four selected areas.

What will benefit the people of Kosovo most at this time is the resolution of vital practical issues, such as missing persons, the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, energy and communications. To resolve those problems is to take the path towards reconciliation and towards the creation of a climate not only of tolerance but also of greater confidence in the future. In this context, the monthly meetings that the labour and social welfare authorities in Belgrade and Pristina have been holding for some time now, virtually without mediation, are an example to be followed.

The parallel structures remain an obstacle to the normalization of life in Kosovo. It is important not only that Belgrade cease its support for their existence, but also that conditions be created that will allow the Serb minority to have confidence in the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and in UNMIK. In this regard, the recommendations contained in the report of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on this subject can be very useful.

We are pleased to see that further progress has been made in the transfer of non-reserved responsibilities to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and that it is envisaged that that transfer will be completed by the end of this year. As we have already indicated, it is important that the process be consistent, both with resolution 1244 (1999) and with the Constitutional Framework.

We are deeply concerned at the attacks committed in recent months against members of the Serb minority, apparently on ethnic grounds and also at the increase in

the number of acts of violence against UNMIK personnel, which in both cases have resulted in loss of life. Not only do those acts deserve the most categorical condemnation on the part of all the political protagonists in Kosovo, but also, as Mr. Holkeri indicated, commensurate action must be taken. We hope that the setting up of special investigation teams by UNMIK will lead to the arrest of the perpetrators of those crimes, so that they will not go unpunished.

As concerns internally displaced persons belonging to minority groups, in particular the Serb minority, we have taken note of the increase in the number of persons who have been repatriated in the course of this year as compared to the same period last year. Nonetheless, as the report rightly indicates, this is a small percentage given the large number of displaced persons who remain outside of Kosovo, mainly in other parts of Serbia and Montenegro.

The sustainable return of displaced persons depends, to a great extent, on their finding acceptable standards of living upon their return, not only from an employment and economic standpoint, which is a basic requirement, but also in terms of safety, security and freedom of movement. It is understandable that the crimes committed in recent months have heightened the sense of insecurity prevailing among minorities, in particular the Serb minority. It is important that measures be taken to improve security conditions.

We have taken note of the efforts that are being made to progress in the establishment of the rule of law, including measures to increase the participation of women and of ethnic minorities in judicial institutions, including the courts, as well as in the Kosovo Police Service and the prison service.

My delegation is particularly pleased to see that progress has been made in mainstreaming the gender perspective and in the participation of women in public administration, including concrete institutional efforts such as the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Gender Equality and the introduction in the Assembly of a draft law on that issue.

Lastly, I should like to ask Mr. Holkeri whether he could provide us with further information on two matters that arose in September. First, can he amplify on the results of the weapons amnesty programme? Secondly, has there been progress in the investigation of the incident in the Dubrava prison?

We once again express our support to you, Sir, and our acknowledgement of your mission.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): First, I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this timely meeting on the situation in Kosovo. I also thank the Special Representative, Mr. Harri Holkeri, and commend him for his comprehensive briefing, particularly taking into account his recent appointment. It was a very thorough analysis of the situation. The proposals he brought to the Council are relevant and important.

Turning to the Secretary-General's report, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the progress that has been made towards the achievement of a substantial degree of autonomy during the period under analysis. At the institutional level, we note the gradual transfer of the non-reserved responsibilities listed in chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework and the work of the Transfer Council. The current transfer of responsibilities from the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to the Provisional Institutions remains an encouraging development of the political process in Kosovo. Political stability requires the formation of stable institutions through the establishment and strengthening of local democracy.

My delegation salutes UNMIK's effort in improving the operation and mechanisms of Kosovo's Provisional Institutions, which has resulted in a gradual increase of responsibilities and the promotion and application of hiring practices established in Kosovo's law concerning public administration.

We also note with interest the Government's presentation of quarterly plans and reports regarding its activities. We observe with equal satisfaction the normal functioning of the Kosovo Assembly, especially the decentralization of the municipal level and cooperation with the Government and UNMIK.

Another crucial element of this institution-building process is the strengthening of the rule of law, which should be done by enhancing the efficiency, impartiality and overall functioning of the judicial system, together with strengthening of law enforcement institutions. In that connection, we welcome the increase in the number of judges and judicial employees, as well as the rebuilding of the judicial infrastructure. These improvements should substantially enhance the capacity of the investigation

and prosecution of serious criminal acts, which still prevail.

We would like to express our serious concern about the lack of security, and to condemn all the acts of violence and terrorism that have been taking place, which Mr. Holkeri referred to this morning again. These are real setbacks for United Nations efforts to foster multi-ethnicity in Kosovo. They go against the spirit of resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework.

We encourage the role played by local leaders in the establishment of the reconciliation and inter-communal dialogue, with the aim of combating extremism and violence and, at the same time, promoting freedom of movement within the country and the return of refugees and displaced persons under conditions that provide real security.

Reinforcement of the Kosovo Police Service is another important step that will improve the security situation. We therefore welcome the crucial role played by UNMIK police in the transfer of knowledge and skills to the Kosovo Police Service in order to enhance security in minority areas and other sensitive locations.

We welcome the economic reforms in Kosovo, such as the privatization process of socially owned enterprises, the amendments to the tax law, the financial and operational audits and cooperation with the European Union's Stabilization and Association Process Tracking Mechanism. These are all very positive steps.

My delegation welcomes the most recent progress in the political process — the opening of talks between the Government of Serbia and Montenegro and the Kosovo Provisional Institutions, which were held in Vienna on 14 October. Thanks to the commendable efforts of Mr. Holkeri, the re-establishment of direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade on practical issues of mutual interest, such as energy, transportation, missing persons, refugees and internally displaced persons, is a substantial step towards the implementation of confidence- and security-building measures. It is a positive step towards the full implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). My delegation also expresses its hope that the parties will maintain their commitment to democracy and the rule of law by continuing that constructive dialogue.

We encourage UNMIK and the Special Representative, Mr. Holkeri, to maintain their very good work in order to add momentum to intensifying a constructive dialogue that should be further extended to include political issues and finally culminate in the achievement of concrete results. I reaffirm my delegation's full support for Special Representative Holkeri.

To conclude, we reiterate that the policy of standards before status remains a consistent objective in framing the future of Kosovo. We appeal to the parties to continue to work towards building a democratic, multi-ethnic and multicultural society, with full respect for the rule of law and minority rights.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We too wish to express our gratitude for the briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo, Mr. Harri Holkeri, who has shed light on the situation on the ground. We completely agree with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General that without the rule of law, without returns and without economic development it will be impossible to fulfil the overall mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to promote an autonomous and substantive self-government in Kosovo in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

In our opinion, a significant event took place in Vienna on 14 October 2003. Apart from any interpretation of the magnitude of the results achieved in Vienna, at least the beginning of the direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade on practical questions of mutual interest is a step that we hope will result in tangible improvements in the daily lives of the population.

We therefore encourage the working groups to discuss the four fundamental areas of the programme: energy, missing persons, the return of internally displaced persons and transport and communications. In this regard we would like to express our appreciation for the active involvement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the preparations for the direct dialogue.

In our opinion there continues to be some significant progress in the transfer of non-reserved responsibilities listed in chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. We encourage this progress, but it can be

complemented with further progress in the transfer of responsibilities given to the Special Representative, in accordance with chapter 8 of the Constitutional Framework.

The report also reflects limited progress in areas such as privatization and unemployment, and greater progress in income and customs services and in the establishment of a range of proposals to reform and amend fiscal policy in Kosovo during 2004. There have been improvements in the representation of women over the past year at the professional level and in the public sector. There has also been progress in work in the areas of housing and property in respect of claims over property in Kosovo.

In spite of all these positive factors and the progress achieved, it is regrettable that the perpetrators of the condemnable acts of violence against the Serb community in Kosovo, as well as those responsible for acts of violence against the authorities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), have not been apprehended. We want to condemn, as many others in this Hall have done, the acts of violence of August 2003 that took lives and caused casualties in Gorazdevac, Bica and the village of Cernica. Equally grave are the growing acts of violence against UNMIK staff who are there precisely to support the rule of law. We believe that this condemnation must be as vigorous and resolute as possible and we appeal strongly for efforts to be increased so that those guilty will not go unpunished, because impunity is an invitation to further acts of violence.

We appreciate measures taken by UNMIK to try to find the perpetrators of these violent acts and bring them to justice. We believe that any acts of violence, any ethnic discrimination or harassment based on ethnic grounds, runs counter to a multi-ethnic Kosovo and is contrary to the spirit of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

We are concerned that the Secretary-General's report (S/2003/996) indicates that the level of integration among the communities and the joint use of public services remains limited. There have been some gestures of support for the return process, such as the open letter signed by leaders of the Kosovo-Albanian population and non-Serb minorities, as well as the resolution adopted by the Kosovo Assembly in July 2003 in this regard. It is also noteworthy that public funds have been allocated by the Government of Kosovo for this process.

We agree with the Special Representative that the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, the political entities of Kosovo and the representatives of communities should continue to work to achieve, within a political context, the "standards-before-status" benchmarks.

Lastly, in addition to the dialogue process between Belgrade and Pristina, the deepening of dialogue between UNMIK and the Kosovo Assembly can contribute, we believe, to the attainment of concrete results regarding the major challenges that lie ahead, challenges we believe must be met for the well-being of the population.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: I would like to begin by welcoming Mr. Holkeri, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), to the Security Council. I am grateful for his comprehensive briefing which will help us greatly in our appreciation of the latest developments in the situation in Kosovo.

We are pleased to note that, with the help of UNMIK and the other relevant participants, progress has been made in the building of institutions, refugee returns, economic improvements and the fight against organized crime.

Particularly noteworthy is that on 14 October 2003, the direct dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade finally began. With respect to the issues of energy, missing persons, refugee return, transportation and communications, four working groups of experts were established. That is a step in the right direction, which we welcome, towards the final and proper settlement of the question of Kosovo.

We appreciate the efforts of the authorities of Serbia and Montenegro to advocate, throughout this period, the settlement of differences through dialogue. We sincerely hope that the leadership of both sides will seize the moment to take part constructively in the dialogue and the follow-up to the work of the working groups, so that a specific outcome of the dialogue can be achieved at an early date. The final settlement of the question of Kosovo hinges upon the overall progress in the political, economic and social areas of Kosovo.

The benchmarks established by UNMIK remain important criteria by which to measure the progress in various areas in Kosovo. These benchmarks should be more detailed in nature, so they can become more operational. We have noticed that UNMIK is now working out an implementation plan and trying to establish specific standards and time frames for the achievement of these benchmarks and we hope its efforts will facilitate the early fulfilment of the benchmarks.

It is our hope that UNMIK, KFOR and the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, as well as other parties concerned, would intensify their efforts to improve the security situation in Kosovo, especially to guarantee the security and freedom of movement for Serbian and other minorities and to create favourable conditions for the return of minorities. The parties concerned should continue their efforts to establish a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo and to adopt specific measures to promote national reconciliation and create favourable conditions in order for all the ethnic communities to live together in harmony. In addition, the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government should continue efforts to improve the economic environment and to promote economic progress.

Finally, I should like to reiterate the Chinese delegation's firm support for Mr. Holkeri and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. We hope that the efforts of all the parties concerned will contribute to settling the issue of Kosovo as soon as possible.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the presence in the Security Council of Mr. Holkeri and to express Bulgaria's gratitude to him for his work to date in an extremely important and delicate mission and often in difficult circumstances. I also assure him of Bulgaria's full support in his tasks.

As an associate country of the European Union, Bulgaria supports the statement to be made shortly on behalf of the Union by the Italian presidency. I should like, however, to make a few comments in my national capacity.

Bulgaria thanks the Secretary-General for his report of 15 October, which contains an in-depth analysis of the efforts of the international community since 1 July 2003 to normalize life in the region. We support the conclusions made in the report and thank the Deputy Special Representative, Mr. Brayshaw, who served as interim Special Representative before Mr. Holkeri's appointment.

The main priority of the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) must remain the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). There is a need to accelerate and, in some cases, to enable the return of non-Albanian refugees in the context of guaranteed security in order to obtain the goal shared by the entire international community: a multi-ethnic and tolerant Kosovo. Bulgaria maintains its well-known position in favour of UNMIK's policy of "standards before status". A lasting solution to the problem of Kosovo can be found only if that policy is implemented in full.

It seems to us that the European Union's approach to Kosovo through its Stabilization and Association Process Tracking Mechanism, which allows the region to align its policies and legislation with those of the Union so as to prevent Kosovo's isolation from the broader context of South-East European integration into European structures, is extremely useful and should be further developed.

Bulgaria unreservedly supports the process of UNMIK's transfer to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of non-reserved responsibilities listed in chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework. This process is in conformity with the mandate and political logic of resolution 1244 (1999) and will allow the Provisional Institutions to develop their administrative and management capacities for the well-being of the people of Kosovo.

We support the efforts being made by UNMIK, KFOR and other international organizations working in Kosovo to establish the genuine rule of law and to ensure a normal life for all the citizens of Kosovo, irrespective of their ethnic origin. Bulgaria urges the political leaders of Kosovo to focus their energies on helping the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNMIK, Mr. Harri Holkeri, fully to implement resolution 1244 (1999). We deem it important that Kosovo politicians and the international community give greater attention to problems relating to the grey economy, organized crime and terrorism.

As to the socio-economic sector, the high rate of unemployment, corruption, smuggling and the traffic in illegal arms, drugs and human beings could imperil the stability of institutions that are still rudimentary, as

well as inter-ethnic relations. In this respect, Bulgaria wishes to stress its concern over acts of violence in Kosovo that have claimed innocent victims among Kosovo minority groups and UNMIK personnel. We believe that the acts of violence that have marked the beginning of Mr. Holkeri's mission only heighten ethnic tensions and pose a major obstacle to the international community's efforts to normalize life in Kosovo, since they prevent the return of refugees at the pace that the entire international community should like to see.

I feel compelled to mention the fact that my country continues to be deeply interested in the enquiry into the murder of the Bulgarian citizen Valentin Krumov, a United Nations staff member who was killed in Pristina in 1999. We hope that the perpetrators will soon be brought to justice.

Bulgaria also wishes to stress that the rule of law needs to be further enhanced. Minorities in Kosovo should be further integrated into central and local Government structures. Bulgaria welcomes the direct dialogue, launched on 14 October in Vienna, between Belgrade and Pristina. We thank the Special Representative for his role in that process and agree with the Secretary-General that the dialogue is one of the most important benchmarks for the implementation of the international community's "standards before status" policy. This dialogue is a major step towards normalization in Kosovo and the implementation of the benchmarks of the stabilization and association process. We hope that the dialogue, which was launched in Vienna on 14 October, will be expanded in the context of the groups of experts that are to continue work in November. It is both highly desirable and extremely important to improve and expand dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina at the local level — through, of course, the very useful mediation provided by UNMIK.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that Bulgaria's diplomatic liaison office in Pristina, which was established at the beginning of October 2003, can contribute to the efforts of the international community to resolve the issue of Kosovo.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): Like other speakers, I would very much like to welcome the first report of Special Representative Harri Holkeri to the Security Council.

I associate my Government with the statement to be made by Italy on behalf of the European Union. Because most of the important points have already been covered in this debate, I will try not to be comprehensive but to touch on just a few points of importance to the United Kingdom.

First, I would like to congratulate Special Representative Holkeri on the launch of the Belgrade-Pristina talks in Vienna. He can count on my Government's full support. The direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is an opportunity to normalize the lives of the people of Kosovo irrespective of their ethnicity. Therefore, like others, we were disappointed that the Kosovo delegation was neither representative of the Provisional Institutions nor multi-ethnic. Mr. Holkeri diplomatically described that as regrettable. The meeting could have shown that Kosovo's Government is genuinely committed to normalization and a true multi-ethnic society. They need to show that. The Provisional Institutions now have a key role in the working groups. It is vital that all parties should now constructively engage in those working groups.

We would also like to support Mr. Holkeri's proposal to examine the further transfer of competencies that do not prejudice Kosovo's status under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). However, as Mr. Holkeri said very clearly, that process cannot be linked to the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. Mr. Holkeri quite rightly said that bargaining over that is not acceptable. The transfer of competencies is an issue that can be agreed upon only by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and, ultimately, by the Council.

I think it is important to reiterate this morning my Government's support for the Council's well-established commitment to the policy of "standards before status". It is important too that Mr. Holkeri should hear clearly from the Council that that has been, and remains, the Council's approach. Many others around the table this morning have underlined that. The Council has, over years and months, looked carefully at the particular circumstances in Kosovo. Committed as we are to multi-ethnicity, to democracy and to prosperity in Kosovo and the region, it seems, to my Government at least, essential to make progress on standards before final status comes to be addressed.

I should like now to touch even more briefly on four other particular points.

The first pertains to the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). We are concerned about the existence of extremist and criminal elements within it. We welcome the joint investigation by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and KFOR. The KPC has come a long way since 1999, and the process of weeding out members with extremist connections appears successful. But the development of the KPC remains a key priority of the United Kingdom.

My second point has to do with our concern about allegations and rumours of corruption surrounding both locals in Kosovo and internationals. I would like to stress our full support for United Nations efforts to tackle that matter.

My third point, like many other speakers, is to say a word on returns. We welcome the "open letter" initiative by the Provisional Institutions. It is a small step towards encouraging Serbs to return, and towards the building of a tolerant society that can provide security for all its minorities. But more still has to be done. Equally, parallel structures must go.

Finally, several have spoken about the process of privatization. I would like to express my Government's support for that process. We believe it is essential for the development of Kosovo's economy, which, as we have heard, is in difficulty. In that connection, we wish to urge prompt clarification of the legal position of Kosovo's transitional Administration.

The President: I would now like to make a brief statement in my national capacity.

I wish again to welcome Mr. Holkeri here in his first appearance before the Council as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo. I would also like to thank him for his briefing.

In particular, we welcome the start of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue on practical matters, which opened on 14 October in Vienna. The beginning of that dialogue is a significant step towards improving regional relations and fulfilling one of the eight internationally endorsed standards. We commend the parties on both sides that participated in the opening of the direct dialogue in Vienna. We were disappointed, however, that some of the parties in Kosovo chose not to participate in the opening of the dialogue. We call upon all parties to fully participate in the follow-on working groups that will address practical issues. Making progress in the areas of transportation, energy, missing persons and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees will not only help Kosovo meet the standards; it will also provide tangible benefits for citizens in both Kosovo and Serbia.

To facilitate further dialogue, the United States reiterates its support for resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework for Kosovo. We will support efforts by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to transfer all non-reserved authorities to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in a timely manner.

It is also vital that the work plan to further operationalize the eight standards be completed in the near term. We hope the work plan will provide direction for Kosovo as it seeks to meet the standards. The Government of the United States will continue to offer technical expertise to UNMIK in developing the work plan, as needed.

The Council's last meeting on Kosovo, on 12 September, followed a series of violent attacks, including shootings that primarily targeted members of the minority Serb community and UNMIK law-enforcement authorities. We call upon all citizens of Kosovo to cooperate with UNMIK and the Kosovo Police Service in their investigation of those terrible crimes. Violence of any type will not be tolerated, and the rule of law must be respected.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Serbia and Montenegro.

Mr. Šahović (Serbia and Montenegro): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2003/996) on the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which is before the Council.

Allow me to join Council members in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his briefing and, even more, for the outstanding commitment to tackling the serious issues in Kosovo and Metohija that he has demonstrated in the short period since taking office.

We regret that at the very outset of his work Mr. Holkeri was confronted with the full extent of the violence, primarily ethnically motivated crimes, as well as attacks on UNMIK personnel. As the Secretary-General's report notes, the security situation in Kosovo and Metohija remains a cause for grave concern. The increased insecurity for minorities is undermining efforts to improve freedom of movement and to accelerate the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and threatens the process of normalization and the prospects for reconciliation in Kosovo and Metohija. The fact that no perpetrators have been identified in the recent crimes against the Serb community or — to the best of our knowledge — against UNMIK personnel further demonstrates the difficulties in the province. My Government therefore fully supports the priorities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in establishing the rule of law; improving the security situation, particularly for non-Albanians; promoting returns and minority rights; and strengthening economic development.

We appreciate the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as the support of the Contact Group and the broader international community, to launch a direct dialogue on practical matters between Belgrade and Pristina. Discussing practical issues to improve the daily lives of all inhabitants of Kosovo and Metohija and achieving measurable success in that respect would be the best means to foster confidence among the communities.

My Government regrets the fact that the representatives of the Government of Kosovo and Metohija did not participate in the meeting in Vienna on 14 October. Therefore, the Pristina delegation was not representative of all communities of the Province. Their representation at that meeting would have offered evidence of political will within the Government in Pristina to build functioning multi-ethnic institutions, which are the best hope for achieving the goal of a democratic society in the province. Hence, we expect the issue of multi-ethnic representation in the delegation of Kosovo and Metohija to be resolved with the commencement of the dialogue at the level of working groups. We also believe that the participation of authorized representatives on both sides, with the necessary authority to discuss and implement the agreed decisions, constitutes an essential prerequisite for the success of the working groups. Serbia and Montenegro stands ready to participate in the working groups as soon as their meetings are scheduled.

The report before the Council states that direct dialogue is one of the benchmarks that has to be met before addressing the status of Kosovo and Metohija. Along with the Security Council, we reiterate our support for the "standards before status" policy. It is of vital importance to clearly and measurably define the criteria for achieving the standards of a democratic, multi-ethnic Kosovo and Metohija. A lack of clarity in that respect could easily lead to differing interpretations of the level of attainment of standards, which in turn could pave the way for future misunderstandings and disagreements. We therefore welcome the announcement of the UNMIK mission performance action plan for the implementation of benchmarks and look forward to learning of its details in the near future.

The transfer of responsibilities to the Provisional Institutions is an issue closely related to the principle of "standards before status". We concur with the report's assessment that the ongoing transfer of non-reserved responsibilities listed in chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework provides the Provisional Institutions with the possibility to demonstrate their ability to ensure efficient and effective administration and their capacity to assume additional responsibilities. However, we note with concern that the Government of Kosovo and Metohija conditions its participation in the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue upon the transfer of the responsibilities reserved for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. That has led to an initiative by the Provisional Institutions to revise the Constitutional Framework, with the aim of annulling the reserved competencies of the Special Representative listed in chapter 8 of the Framework. Such a move would obviously represent a completely unacceptable prejudgement of the final status of Kosovo and Metohija. It would defy the clear and repeated stance of the international community that the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue is to address practical matters only, leaving talks on the political future of Kosovo for a later stage.

In the report of the Secretary-General, some concerns were raised over the existence of so-called parallel structures. The statements we have just heard from Mr. Holkeri and several members of the Council echoed those concerns. Indeed, earlier this month, the

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo and Metohija issued a rather lengthy report on the subject, as mentioned by the representative of Mexico. While stating that parallel structures can be detrimental to the rule of law in Kosovo and Metohija, the OSCE report also emphasizes that

> "A more pragmatic approach is needed by UNMIK, which might have to recognize the fact that some Kosovans, in the past, did not have any other reasonable choice than to approach Serb-run structures. Recourse to an UNMIK court or administrative body would have meant, among other things, risking their personal security."

Further on, the OSCE Mission report points out that the practice of arresting and convicting people for possession of forged documents, simply because they are issued by Serbian authorities operating in Kosovo, must cease. Also, the report is clear that the Serb-run hospitals and other health care facilities have proven necessary. The OSCE concludes that the Provisional Institutions, for example the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, has to create conditions in the Kosovan schools that accommodate the needs of all communities, including Kosovo Serbs. I think that those conclusions of the OSCE provide some explanations regarding parallel structures.

Finally, we support the Secretary-General's assessment that the development of effective institutions of self-government in Kosovo and Metohija needs to take place in a context of improving contacts and cooperation with my Government. We share the view that relations between UNMIK and Belgrade have improved since the arrival of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We are firmly committed to strengthening that cooperation.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming the commitment of Serbia and Montenegro to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the Common Document signed between my Government and UNMIK on 5 November 2001. In the framework of those documents and other agreements between our authorities and UNMIK, the Special Representative can rely on our full assistance and support.

The President: I call on the representative of Italy.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the associated countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway declare that they align themselves with this statement.

We have carefully read Secretary-General Kofi Annan's new report on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2003/996), and we have listened attentively to the comprehensive briefing by the Special Representative and Head of UNMIK. The European Union thanks Mr. Holkeri and commends the work he has done since he began his assignment on 13 August; it reaffirms its strong support for him in the challenging task of fully implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), in which he can count on our continued assistance. The European Union urges all concerned in Kosovo and elsewhere in the region to cooperate in a constructive manner with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, while refraining from unilateral acts and statements that risk jeopardizing the goal of a stable, multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo.

The European Council of 16 and 17 October welcomed the launch of the direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina on practical issues, held in Vienna on 14 October, as a key benchmark in the international community's strategy of "standards before status", based on resolution 1244 (1999).

Because it addresses issues with a direct impact on people's lives, it represents an essential step towards normalization and further advancement in Kosovo towards European standards within the Stabilization and Association process.

The European Council has also expressed its disappointment that some of the key interlocutors had chosen not to attend. It has particularly stressed the importance of establishing technical working groups in November on energy, transport and communication, returnees and missing persons. To this end, it has urged both parties to make the necessary preparations and to engage constructively and unconditionally in this process on a multi-ethnic basis. It has also supported Mr. Holkeri's efforts in this direction.

The European Union is confident that technical talks in the working groups will begin soon, leading to concrete solutions. For that purpose, the European Union urges all parties involved, namely the representatives from the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, to fully commit themselves, thus making an essential contribution to the possibility of producing, as early as possible, tangible results. The European Union does not consider dialogue to be optional. We therefore expect both sides to engage seriously and constructively in the working groups.

The European Union fully shares the Secretary-General's conclusions that:

> "The ongoing transfer of non-reserved responsibilities listed in chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework increasingly provides the Provisional Institutions with the possibility to demonstrate their capacity to assume additional responsibilities, and their ability to ensure efficient and effective administration" (S/2003/996, paragraph 53).

The European Union encourages Kosovo's Provisional Institutions to strengthen cooperation and consultation with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). In this respect, it welcomes the development of a work plan aimed at further operationalizing the "standards before status" strategy. Direct dialogue talks on practical issues should also be part of the work plan.

Much remains to be done in Kosovo to guarantee full respect for the rule of law and for human and minority rights, including adequate minority participation at both the central and local levels of Government. As noted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2003/996), Belgrade has again been requested to dismantle parallel administrative structures and replace them through cooperation with Kosovo's multi-ethnic Provisional Institutions.

The European Union reaffirms its strong condemnation of all acts of violence and intimidation in Kosovo, in particular those directed at minorities. Their only effect is to jeopardize the process of normalization and reconciliation. The return of minorities remains an essential benchmark in the framework of the "standards before status" strategy.

Allow us to conclude by saying that the European Union continues to be firmly committed to supporting Kosovo's economic recovery, which is indispensable for ensuring stability and development within that society.

The President: The next speaker on my list in the representative of the Ukraine.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): As we are nearing the end of the month of October, which has been filled with many challenging events, I would like to congratulate you and your team on the forthcoming successful conclusion of your presidency of the Security Council. The decision to hold today's open debate is yet another example of the Council's active involvement in Kosovo activities.

It gives me special pleasure to welcome here the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Harri Holkeri. A skilful master of political dialogue and compromise, Mr. Holkeri inherited the difficult task of facilitating political stabilization and multi-ethnic reconciliation in Kosovo. On behalf of the Ukrainian Government, I wish him every success in leading these processes to fruition.

Four years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), the Kosovo case still reminds us that peace, in its broader sense, is not just an absence of war, but rather a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice. Though the report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/996) of 15 October 2003 reflects many promising developments on the ground, I trust we all agree that the current period is one of the most sensitive and decisive for international efforts in the province.

An optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity; however, a pessimist finds a calamity at every opportunity. To avoid being trapped between these two controversial approaches, in assessing the general situation in Kosovo we think we should acknowledge that, for all its real and perceived failures, the international presence has achieved important results in laying a foundation for democratic transformations in the region. However, the situation will remain fragile and shaky unless the temptation to engage in internal political manoeuvres in Kosovo is replaced by a strong will and a strategic vision for a multi-ethnic society in which all its people can live in security and in dignity.

The international community's strategy of "standards before status", as was said by many representatives, provides the necessary framework for the practical and result-oriented work towards this goal.

We fully support the efforts of the Special Representative, Mr. Holkeri, aimed at implementing the benchmarks, improving the rule of law and security conditions, furthering returns and minority rights and promoting economic development.

We regret that the initial period of Mr. Holkeri's activities has been marred by a number of violent attacks directed against members of the Kosovo Serb community and United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) law enforcement personnel. Ukraine deplores and condemns the acts of terrorism that have taken place in the last few months in the province and underlines that all such outbursts of hatred merely undermine the stabilization processes there.

The major challenge faced by Kosovar society is the lack of domestic inter-ethnic dialogue as a prerequisite for stability and civil reforms. The confidence-building measures in the region require proactive involvement from all possible actors, including the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, local communities, the federal authorities of Serbia and Montenegro, UNMIK and the international and regional organizations and donors.

Against this background, my delegation welcomes the opening of a direct dialogue on practical issues of mutual interest between Belgrade and Pristina on 14 October in Vienna as an essential step towards normalization of their relations and the furthering of the region's advance to European integration. The role of UNMIK in facilitating and launching this dialogue is fully commendable.

However, we cannot but express disappointment that some interlocutors did not attend the meeting in Vienna, despite the Thessaloniki commitment. Therefore let me join previous speakers who called upon all parties on both sides to participate fully and without preconditions in the technical consultations as they move into expert-level working groups. Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government should realize that participation in such dialogue is their obligation.

Political stability in Kosovo requires democratic, stable and functioning local institutions. Thus, it is important to ensure that the transfer by UNMIK of non-reserved responsibilities listed in chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework is conducted in an effective, gradual and controlled manner and that the Kosovo Provisional Institutions continue to adopt policies and legislation which address the concrete and urgent needs of the local population. In this regard, UNMIK has to retain its ability to effectively oversee the work of the Provisional Institutions in process and after the transfer, while maintaining full responsibility for reserved areas.

Much remains to be done to provide Kosovo with effective and sustainable judicial institutions and law enforcement structures. My delegation also believes that additional efforts should be made to fight terrorism and organized crime.

We also look forward to improving the current situation in the field of sustainable returns and minority rights. The latest assessment of the situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo, made by the mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, indicates that

> "the changes noted ... are not yet fundamental enough to conclude that conditions would exist for large-scale return of ethnic minorities in the near future".

However, we believe that the concerted efforts of the international presence, in close cooperation with Belgrade and Pristina, will provide yet more impetus to push the process forward.

Being an active contributor to a Kosovo settlement, Ukraine reaffirms its commitment to promoting peace and security in the province and to ensuring its further stabilization, inter-ethnic reconciliation and recovery.

The President: I call on the representative of Japan.

Mr. Motomura (Japan): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open Security Council meeting concerning the situation in Kosovo. I thank Mr. Harri Holkeri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing.

First, Japan welcomes the direct dialogue that began among the representatives of the Government of

the Republic of Serbia and of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the authority in Kosovo on 14 October in Vienna. We believe that the dialogue is the outcome of sincere efforts by the parties concerned and is an important step towards resolution of the Kosovo issue. We strongly hope that confidence between the parties will be built through continued dialogue, leading to a concrete agreement on the various issues Kosovo is facing. We also express our deep respect and thanks to Mr. Holkeri for his strenuous efforts to initiate the dialogue.

The Japanese Government considers that the Kosovo issue should be resolved based on resolution 1244 (1999) and the standards before status policy, and urges all the parties concerned to adopt a cautious and restrained attitude. Regarding the standards before status policy as the only tangible method for resolving the Kosovo issue, my Government has in the past provided humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, amounting to approximately $187 million, in a variety of areas, including refugee returns, housing and electricity.

We are carefully watching developments in relation to Kosovo, including this direct dialogue, and, in cooperation with the international community, intend to maintain our commitment to achieving the stability and prosperity of the South-Eastern European region, in the recognition that the stabilization of the situation in Kosovo is essential for that goal.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Albania.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): Allow me, Sir, to express our sincere congratulations on your excellent work and the results achieved by the Security Council during the month of your presidency.

The Albanian delegation welcomes the presence of Mr. Harri Holkeri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and wishes him success in his important work, following the successful efforts of all his predecessors: the late Mr. Vieira de Mello, Mr. Kouchner, Mr. Haekkerup and Mr. Steiner.

The Albanian delegation commends the Secretary-General for his report and Special Representative Holkeri for today's comprehensive briefing. We emphasize Albania's consistent and comprehensive commitment to implementing resolution 1244 (1999) and to working together with all the countries of the region in order to achieve full democratic integration into the European Union and foster sustainable peace and stability in the Balkans.

Albania welcomes the beginning of dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade in Vienna, and encourages continued dialogue between the parties on technical cooperation issues in the priority fields defined by the United Nations. Kosovo's political institutions must understand that the process of cooperation between the two parties is the only way to establish a democratic and multi-ethnic society. Starting the dialogue demonstrates a great sense of responsibility. Kosovo's democratic institutions should set something new in motion by getting rid of the hatred and national division nourished by past totalitarian regimes. Dialogue means progress, not submission. It is a process that does not deny the legitimate and universal rights of peoples to self-determination and independence; rather, the power of reason and uncontested reality legitimizes it as irreversible.

The international community would probably have raised awareness of the need for dialogue better if the representatives of Kosovo's institutions had felt legitimate and entitled to represent their country and exercise their free will. The lack of full executive competences, which have not yet been transferred; the inability to accelerate the pace of privatization in order to ensure a free market economy; and the absence of a complete judicial framework for the economy and administration: these have psychologically influenced, and thus slowed down, a constructive dialogue.

The political situation and the forthcoming elections in both countries have resulted in the dialogue process being used for political and electoral rhetoric; in many cases it has been used for propaganda, declaring victory by one party over the other, in an attempt to reassert control and dominance. In his report the Secretary-General repeatedly and rightfully expresses concern over the existence of parallel structures in Kosovo and various pressures that have been hindering the creation of a multi-ethnic society. It will be difficult to consolidate a multi-ethnic society if one party cannot fully guarantee the freedoms and rights of minorities, and if the other will think and act under pressure as if it were not part of the society.

In some cases, certain Belgrade officials put pressure on independent United Nations institutions of justice to judge the leaders of political parties in Kosovo who were members of the international coalition against Milosevic's criminal regime, while there has never been a public apology for the monstrous crimes committed against the Albanian people of Kosovo — the mass graves, the genocide of the last century. Albanians in Kosovo can forgive, but they cannot forget. New messages of trust and confidence should bond the two countries.

Albania believes that the international community's request for implementation of the standards before status policy is a priority for Kosovo. Achieving it will show the seriousness of the Government of Kosovo about meeting its commitments for the future.

The Albanian delegation has repeatedly urged that representatives of the legal institutions of Kosovo be present at discussions about the duties of the Security Council and relevant matters under its consideration, so that they may better take responsibility for their own future. We regret to inform the Council that not only the citizens of Kosovo, but also the ministers of its interim Government, learn about Security Council positions and directives only through articles and editorials of the free media. Their presence as part of the delegation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General would reinforce their sense of responsibility and their commitment to the successful carrying out of the United Nations mission.

The President: Since there are no further speakers on my list, I invite Mr. Holkeri to make any final observations or responses that he might wish to make to questions raised during the course of the morning.

Mr. Holkeri: In my presentation at the beginning of this discussion, I tried to follow the advice of Lakhdar Brahimi, who so wisely recommended three years ago in his report on United Nations peacekeeping reform, "The Secretariat must tell the Security Council what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear" (*S/2000/809, page x*).

I will try to answer some of the questions raised by the members of the Council and other speakers, following the order of the speakers.

First, I note Pakistani concern pertaining to the question of standards before status. However, the concept remains valid to me as long as the Security Council has not decided otherwise. In accordance with the decision of the Council, I intend to complete the transfer of non-reserved responsibilities to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government by the end of this year. The reserved powers will remain my exclusive responsibility unless the Council makes a different determination. At the same time, I intend to involve the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in some reserved areas, without transferring them. This will happen through the establishment of consultative mechanisms in different areas of administration.

With regard to the comments of the representative of Germany concerning benchmarks, we have been working on standards for four months in order to operationalize them. Specific goals and indicators have been devised. The indicators will permit the identification of the level of performance to be attained by local actors. Standards and indicators remain under the control of the international community and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). My intention is to finalize the implementation plan by the time of my next visit to the Security Council.

The Ambassadors of Spain and the United Kingdom referred to the question of corruption. Let me assure them that the allegations are taken seriously and will be subject to thorough investigation. In this respect, administrative measures have already been taken.

The representative of Spain raised two other issues. His first question, about parallel structures, was also touched on by the representative of Serbia and Montenegro. Parallel structures continue to exist in the public sector in two areas: administration and service provision. That is detrimental to the rule of law and prevents the integration of Kosovo Serbs into the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. In the first case, we will deal firmly with attempts to run a parallel government in Kosovo. In the other, UNMIK will take a step-by-step approach, replacing, for example, parallel schools and hospitals with Provisional Institutions of Self-Government structures when they can provide the same level of service. The issue of parallel structures is addressed in my contacts with Belgrade. Serbia must show its commitment to resolution 1244 (1999).

The other issue raised by the representative of Spain was that of returns. The rate of return has continued to accelerate, with a total of 2,653 returns so far this year, 845 of them being Serbs. This brings the total number of returns to 8,768. Kosovo Serb returns are 50 per cent greater this year than last. The situation of returns depends, of course, on security conditions on the ground and other conditions, not least job opportunities. That is why our priority tasks in this area are to improve the security environment and create the necessary economic conditions on the ground, in cooperation with local administrative structures.

The representative of Mexico wanted further information on two questions, the first of which related to the weapons amnesty. The amnesty conducted this year can hardly be considered a success. The number of weapons surrendered was very low — 150 or so. Of course, we must take into account the fact that it was the third exercise of that kind in Kosovo. But it must be noted that, parallel to the voluntary surrender of weapons, the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and UNMIK continue proactive measures, such as searches for illegal weapons and checkpoints. We have been quite successful in finding illegal weapons recently.

The other issue raised by the representative of Mexico was the question of Dubrava prison. On 4 September, inmates of that prison, which is Kosovo's largest detention facility, occupied and barricaded a prison block in protest against conditions and refused to return to their cells. When the prison guards, in an attempt to force them back to their cells, tried to enter the occupied block, the prisoners set fire to their mattresses. Five prisoners died and a further 16 were injured in the ensuing fire.

A police investigation into the incident was launched immediately, and an independent Commission of Inquiry consisting of international and local members has been established to look into its causes and to provide recommendations.

I should like to reassure the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria that the case of Valentin Krumov remains open. Any new information that comes to the attention of UNMIK police will immediately be communicated to the Bulgarian authorities.

In conclusion, let me say that the Permanent Representative of Russia and other speakers today highlighted the need to proceed energetically in the areas of housing security; law and order; improving conditions for the Serb and other non-majority communities in Kosovo; and advancing returns. I should like to reiterate that those issues remain my key priorities for the Mission.

The President: I know that I speak for all members of the Council when I say that we appreciate your having appeared before us and briefed us this morning and responded in such a forthright way to the various questions that were raised. We wish to commend you on the excellent start that you appear to have undertaken with respect to the exercise of your important responsibilities, and we know that the mission of leading the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo is in extremely good hands.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.